

NEWS FROM NORTHAMPTON

Northampton Presbyterian Church
539 Buck Road, Holland, PA 18966

DECEMBER 2021



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December's Song(s)

By: The Rev. Judith A. Dwyer

We have once more entered the season of waiting and wondering, hoping and praying, baking and making all things ready. Ready to welcome the King of kings, Prince of Peace, Savior of the world into our lives.

Some of us look forward to this with the delight of a child each and every year. Others look back through the thick glass of memory to a place and time of celebration with those who now live with God on the other side of time. And some find this season full of things that are too painful to talk about, just yet.

Yes, Christmas holds the fullness of time and the sentiment of days gone by. My own memories take me to a certain bookshelf in my home office every Christmas, to pull out an album (remember those?) of music I recorded as a child with my father, the church choir director. While I listen to the music, I read the names of those who sang with me then. Most now sing in glory; a few are still here to remember making the glorious sound of Christmas come alive.

That sound is one many of us yearn for throughout our lives. Writing in *Sojourners* magazine, theologian Jim Wallis remembers his days as a college activist adrift from his church family. At Christmas break he found himself riding home with the radio blasting the carols of the season. "Even as that college activist kid," he says, "I needed those carols to remind me of what and who was most important in this world that I wanted so much to change. I needed those Christmas carols, and still do, to remind me of what God's world is all about and, therefore, what our lives should be too."¹



More than mere sentiment, the carols of Christmas sing us through the story of a young, single mother on the margins giving birth to a child in the lowest of circumstances. Carols bring alive images of an impoverished family making its star-lit way to safety mere steps ahead of the death-dealers who would take their lives. They remind us that the glory of Christmas lies in the reversals of poor over rich, marginalized over powerful, unknown over exalted.

This is a truth I learned to sing later in life with the help of composer Benjamin Britten. Under the direction of my dad yet again, I was met with Britten's haunting image of a "little babe so few days old...come to rifle Satan's fold."² Britten wrote his *Ceremony of Carols* in 1942 while making the harrowing wartime journey from the US to England aboard a cargo ship. While the ship's crew faced down the ever-present threat of annihilation by enemy submarines, Britten calmly pieced together one of our most enduring Christmas cantatas.

Christ comes in the midst of war, deprivation, disaffection and loss to all who yearn to sing again. To remind children in fact, in college and at heart what God's world — and our lives — are all about. May the songs of December bring the carol of the Christ child to you and yours this Christmas, wherever you may be.

- Pastor Judy

¹ Jim Wallis, "SINGING OUR WAY BACK TO HOPE: Lessons in Resistance from the Christmas Carols," Sojourners Magazine, December 22, 2016. <https://sojo.net/articles/singing-our-way-back-hope>. Accessed 12/3/2021.

² Benjamin Britten, *A Ceremony of Carols*, New York, Boosey & Hawkes Publishers.

A poster for Advent Services and Special Events. It features a green border with holly leaves and berries. The word 'Advent' is written in a large, pink, cursive font. Below it, 'SERVICES AND SPECIAL EVENTS' is written in a smaller, pink, sans-serif font. The events are listed in a dark green, sans-serif font, with dates and times. The events are: December 12th - Third Sunday in Advent: JOY, December 19th - Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 24th - Christmas Eve, and December 26th - Casual Christmas Sunday. Each event has a time and a description of the service or group. The poster is decorated with holly leaves and berries.

Advent

SERVICES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

December 12th - Third Sunday in Advent: JOY
Wear your pink for Holy Laughter Sunday!
10 AM Worship followed by Coffee Hour
11:15 AM Christian Life Groups: *A Surprising God*

December 19th - Fourth Sunday in Advent
10 AM Cantata Sunday: *Let There Be Christmas*
11:15 AM Christian Life Groups: *A Surprising God*

December 24th - Christmas Eve
7 PM Family-Friendly Candlelight Service

December 26th - Casual Christmas Sunday
Wear Your Favorite Ugly Christmas Sweater, Socks or Shirt
10 AM Service of Lessons and Carols (No CLGs)



Save the Dates

NEXT DRIVE-THRU FOOD DRIVE: Monday, January 17, 2022

If you would like to help with our next MLK Day Food Drive (10 AM—12 PM), benefitting the Food Center at Morrisville Presbyterian Church, please email our missions committee at npcmission@comcast.net.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: Sunday, January 30, 2022

Please submit all Annual Reports to the church office by **January 16th**. They will be made available for review on January 23rd.

2022 GIVING ENVELOPES

Giving envelopes will be made available at the Christmas Eve Service. If you are not able to worship with us in person, please contact the church office (215-357-8282 / npchurch@comcast.net) and a set will be mailed to your home. Online giving continues to be available at northamptonpresby.com/online-giving. Thank you for faithfully supporting NPC!

White Gift 2021

By: Cathy Cocchia

History of the White Gift:

Traditionally, on White Gift Sunday the service takes the form of a drama which depicts some aspect of the Christmas story. In keeping with the spirit of God's gift to us in Jesus, church members make a donation in a white envelope to be given to someone in need. The tradition of the White Gift has its roots in a small church in Ohio in 1904. It began as a humble way to reflect on the love and devotion of the giver and not the value of the gift. A minister's wife initiated the idea to solve the problem of inequity of gifts given at a Sunday school Christmas party. Instead of receiving gifts, the focus shifted to bringing gifts to Jesus that in turn could be shared with people who did not have much. All the gifts would come wrapped in plain white paper, to avoid comparisons of an expensive gift to a modest gift; everyone would share in the joy of giving to others (paraphrased from *History of the White Gift/Faye's Flyspot*).

We have been made aware of a local Bucks County family that is in need of our care. The family has been designated as our White Gift recipient. Thank you for the outpouring of love this Congregation has for meeting need as people face raising their families during the pandemic. We continue to provide a beacon of light in the community during difficult time; sharing the resources we have been so richly blessed with. We are thankful for the community of believers at Northampton Presbyterian Church that have a rich tradition of helping those less fortunate.

Please place your donations in a plain, white envelope labeled "White Gift" and place it in the offering plate or send it to the church office. May the Christmas season bring hope to your heart, grace to your spirit and peace to your life. Merry Christmas from the Mission Committee!



Minute for Mission:

Medical Benevolence Foundation

By: Kathie Pisciella

Some of our NPC Mission envelope/online offerings have been designated to support the Medical Benevolence Foundation (MBF). Their goal is simple: To give hope and healing to the poor around the globe.

Christian Witness: Their desire is that everyone served by an MBF partner has the opportunity to learn about Jesus and discover how to develop a lifelong relationship with God. This good news is modeled and shared in culturally sensitive ways — never through coercion.

Excellence in Medical Care: MBF strives for medical excellence by promoting medical missions care through the physical presence of partner co-workers, education, disease prevention, and curative care, for those in impoverished communities suffering from acute and chronic illness. MBF seeks to bring up-to-date, evidence-based health care practices and technology as they support the appropriate, affordable, sustainable and quality services of their partners.

Sustainability: MBF will pursue projects that empower their partners to meet their health care needs and improve wellness in their community. This is by an emphasis on training local administrative and healthcare personnel, as well as the creation of a replicable, culturally sustainable model that allows for future growth and modification.

Accountability: The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the mandate that God's servants must be wise stewards of the resources God provides. MBF acknowledge implicitly and explicitly that every resource God provides actually belongs to God; their job is to be faithful managers. MBF seeks to model the highest standards of stewardship behavior through regular and consistent reporting. They will assist every international partner to develop ongoing management plans, establish and monitor performance metrics and provide appropriate reporting.

Visit their website for more information: www.medicalmission.org

"Ways to Help Medical Benevolence Foundation" – Join them for prayer (by conference call) on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 1:30pm, 605-313-5831 code 459503

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,'" (Acts 20:35).

WE WILL WELCOME THE STRANGER

For I was hungry
and you gave
me food,
I was thirsty
and you gave
me drink,
I was a stranger
and you
welcomed me.

Matthew 25:35



Update for individuals or small groups who want to be part of welcoming refugees

“Thank you to everyone who donated household goods to newly arrived refugees. Bethany Christian Services' storage areas are completely full of supplies!”

Contact Kathy Hurwitz for more information.

For those Community groups and Faith Organizations who cannot commit to a Co-Sponsorship, there are many, many ways that your group can organize and form a team to help refugees.

1. "New Neighbor" - a mentor(s) who meets with a new family and assists with cultural orientation, some transportation if necessary, and acts as a friendly point of contact for the whole family. 1 hour per week for the first 3-6 months.
2. Transporter – Have a few members of your team available to help drive to medical appointments for the entire family. This is a very important volunteer responsibility!
3. Transportation Trainer – an easy job – one team member could volunteer just a few hours to teach a family how to use the transportation system.
4. ESL Tutors – a volunteer available to teach English and some cultural training to a new family. We can provide contacts for training. 1 hour per week per student.
5. Grocery/Food/Cooking Support – When a family arrives, it may take 2-3 weeks for food stamps to begin. Have a team of 4-5 volunteers buy culturally appropriate foods and prepare an approved hot meal for the family's arrival. We will provide grocery lists for two weeks of food and recipes.



More Ways to Volunteer ...

Volunteering at Bethany

We are happy to announce we have received a large amount of donations. However, we need volunteers to assist in sorting donated goods, organizing them into bins and creating ready-to-go bathroom, bedroom, and kitchen kits. If you have a team that can donate 2-3 hours working with Bethany, this would be a great opportunity for you!

Housing

Housing is the most important area of need right now for our Refugee Program at Bethany. If you have housing or have connections to landlords, we are seeking apartments that range in size from 1- 3 bedrooms and that cost between \$500-\$1,300 in monthly rent. We are happy to discuss with you in greater detail the process of renting apartments to refugees, such as funding and how Bethany supports the landlord-tenant relationship.

Furniture/Set-Up

When a refugee and their family arrives at their new apartment, Bethany is required to ensure it is fully furnished as they start their new lives in the U.S. We are seeking donations of gently used or new furniture and volunteers with trucks or vans to deliver and help set up the furniture in refugees' homes.

We are so grateful for your interest in serving the refugee community!



Financial Update

By: Pam Kemper

Dear Friends,

November was a relatively quiet month in NPC finance.

Expenses were typical for this time of year and we saw a small rebound in giving. Along with the continued use of our Pastor Housing Account to defray the Pastor's Housing costs, we were able to finish November in the black. This, of course, also helped to improve our bottom-line for the year.

As we begin the final month of our financial year, I want thank you for your faithful giving in yet another year of uncertainty.

- Pam

Financial Overview—*estimated*

	Nov 2021	2021-YTD
GENERAL FUND GIVING	19,295.52	215,910.31
Housing Fund Transfer	3,500.00	6,000.00
GENERAL FUND EXPENSES		
PAYROLL	10,448.28	119,544.05
BENEFITS	2,232.50	14,337.34
ADMINISTRATIVE	500.60	10,998.84
CHRISTIAN ED	329.70	451.60
FACILITIES		
PNC Mortgage	4,705.03	51,755.33
Church Facilities	4,561.75	42,065.20
OUTREACH		54.00
PASTOR SEARCH		1954.23
STEWARDSHIP		254.29
WORSHIP	501.49	3,151.34
PRESCHOOL COST ALLOCATION	-2,300.00	-14,200.00
Total GENERAL FUND EXPENSES	20,979.35	230,366.22
NET	1,816.17	(8,455.91)

December



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
5 <i>10 AM Communion Service Livestream & In-Person</i> <i>11:15 Hanging of the Greens</i>	6	7 <i>7:15 PM Boy Scouts</i>	8 <i>8:30 AM Men's Breakfast at Robin Hood</i>	9 <i>7 PM Choir Practice</i>	10	11
12 <i>10 AM Sunday Worship Livestream & In-Person</i> <i>11:15 AM CLGs</i>	13 <i>6:30 PM Cub Scouts (Mohl)</i> <i>6:30 PM Cub Scouts (Lions)</i>	14 <i>7:15 PM Boy Scouts</i>	15 <i>11:15 AM GW Preschool Nativity Program</i>	16 <i>6:30 PM Girl Scouts</i> <i>7 PM Choir Practice</i>	17	18
19 <i>10 AM Cantata Service Livestream & In-Person</i> <i>11:15 AM CLGs</i>	20 <i>6:30 PM Boy Scouts Committee</i>	21 <i>7:15 PM Boy Scouts</i>	22 <i>9 AM Women's Breakfast at Manny's Deli</i>	23 <i>7 PM Choir Practice</i>	24 CHRISTMAS EVE <i>7 PM Family-Friendly Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</i>	25 CHRISTMAS DAY
26 <i>10 AM Casual Christmas: Service of Lessons and Carols Livestream & In-Person</i>	27	28	29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY
<div>THE CHURCH WILL BE CLOSED DURING CHRISTMAS WEEK</div>						
2 <i>10 AM Sunday Worship Livestream & In-Person</i> <i>11:15 AM CLGs</i>	3 <i>7 PM Mission Committee</i>	4 <i>7:15 PM Boy Scouts</i>	5 <i>10 AM SBRM Blanket Group</i> <i>6 PM Women's Bible Café</i>	6 <i>6:30 PM Girl Scouts</i> <i>7 PM Choir Practice</i>	7	8 <i>10 AM Boy Scouts Court of Honor</i>

Livestream Information:

All "livestreamed" messages are broadcasted from our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/northamptonpresby
 Sunday Worship Services are additionally posted on our website: www.northamptonpresby.com/sermon-videos

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539 Buck Road, Holland, PA 18966 215-357-8282 Fax 215-364-5867
 CHURCH OFFICE: npchurch@comcast.net PASTOR: npcdwyer@comcast.net
www.northamptonpresby.org