

NEWS FROM NORTHAMPTON

Northampton Presbyterian Church
539 Buck Road, Holland, PA 18966

DECEMBER 2023

KEEP READING FOR..

- *Advent Schedule*
- *Financial Update*
- *Mission Update*
- *Minute for Missions:
Drawers for Drawers*

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

"Silent Night"

by Ann Weems

INTO THIS SILENT NIGHT
AS WE MAKE OUR WEARY WAY
WE KNOW NOT WHERE,
JUST WHEN THE NIGHT
BECOMES ITS DARKEST
AND WE CANNOT SEE OUR PATH,
JUST THEN
IS WHEN THE ANGELS WALK IN,
THEIR HANDS FULL OF STARS.





A Word from the Pastor

By: The Rev. Judith A. Dwyer

You may have noticed some stars popping up around our hallways and in our sanctuary and building entrances. These silent, light-filled reminders of the very best news any angel could possibly share with us are meant to encourage our weary hearts in what has been a long season of darkness. I love this prayer by Nadia Bolz Weber that speaks to our souls' yearning for light "just when the night becomes its darkest:"

Dear God,

My heart is a mess.

There's just more suffering and loss and fear in the world than it can hold right now. Help me not let in so much news that I have to put the "closed" sign up in the door of my heart, because my family and friends need it to stay open.

Sometimes my heart doesn't really trust love.

When my heart is full, help the anxious thoughts and feelings that poke a hole and empty it again come more slowly (or preferably not at all).

Sometimes the old girl does unhelpful things to protect herself.

When my heart is broken, help it not also create an emotional autoimmune disorder – attacking as pathogen what is actually harmless.

But sometimes, sometimes I'm surprised by my heart.

It can be more deeply in love than I ever knew possible.

It can increasingly be gladdened by simple things I used to ignore.

It can hurt for people I don't even like very much.

It can heal from things I used to think would destroy it.

It can long for you, God. But in ways that look less like piety and more like friendship.

It's confusing, having a human heart.

So help me remember that while my heart may break, expand, hurt, heal, close, open and overflow - none of that affects my soul.

None of it can get to the part of me which bears your image; the part of me that contains the divine, inextinguishable spark. And for that I am thankful. Because, as stated earlier, my heart is a mess.

AMEN.

If your heart is a mess right now, you have come to the right place. A place where you will find that inextinguishable spark of the divine, hidden amongst the garland and the stars, the music of angels and the warm companionship of others making their way to the manger. To that place where the unexpected waits for us to come, crawling on our knees, to surprise us with warmth and light and love overflowing. Nothing can keep us from that love: we have simply to open our hearts and let it in.



So come this season to this, your church home, where you will find hands full of stars to light your way. On any and all of these days [SEE BELOW] you will find yourself not so lost after all. And others with hearts that are a mess right now.

For we have received the good news: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," Isaiah 40:3-5. Amen!

- *Pastor Judy*

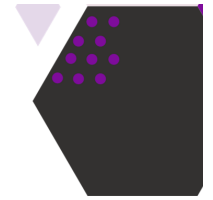
ADVENT

2023

-  **FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
DECEMBER 3
10 am Communion Service
11:30 am Hanging of the Greens
-  **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
DECEMBER 10
10 am Worship Service
-  **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
DECEMBER 17
10 am "Come Worship the King"
(Featuring our Choir)
-  **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
& CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24
4 pm Family Candlelight Service
(No morning worship service)
-  **NEW YEAR'S EVE**
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31
4 pm "Watch Night" Service
(No morning worship service)

Financial Update

By: Jessica Stehr

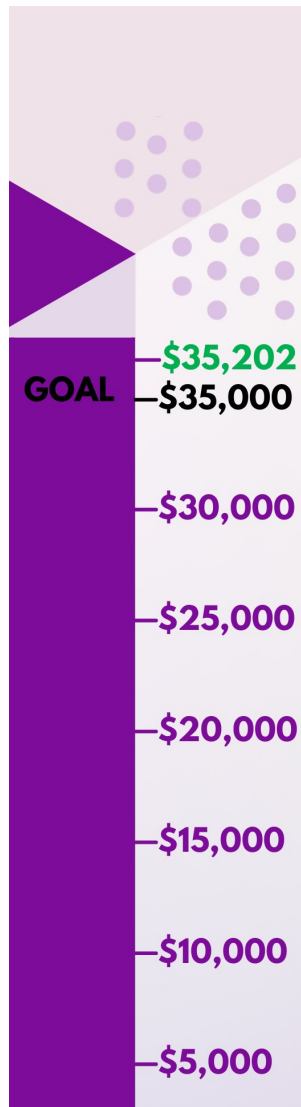


NPC Awarded \$7,500 Grant for 2024!!!

Good news! Northampton Presbyterian Church was awarded a \$7,500 Small Church Pastoral Compensation grant for 2024 from the Philadelphia Presbytery. The funds will be used to offset a portion of our 2024 expenses for Pastor Judy's compensation. NPC's largest expense category is salary / compensation for our wonderful church leadership and staff, including Pastor Judy.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia created the Small Church Pastoral Compensation Grant in recognition of the increasing financial challenges to maintaining full-time pastoral leadership. This grant seeks to offer financial flexibility and breathing space for smaller congregations facing declining membership and increasing costs and while demonstrating and nurturing a passion for mission.

As noted in a prior newsletter article, we also received a grant for 2023. One of the elements that helped us to be awarded this second grant was our ongoing work on a vision and on sustainability for NPC. We will have the opportunity to apply for an additional grant for 2025.



NPC Stucco Campaign Goal Achieved!

Thanks to your generosity, we have reached our stucco fundraising goal of \$35,000!!

We had set a goal to achieve this contribution amount beyond regular giving in 2 years. Working together, we achieved it in less than one year. The final total was \$35,202.

As a reminder, replacing the stucco on our building façade in early 2023 cost \$135,000. We paid for this with a \$25,000 grant, a \$75,000 low-interest loan and \$35,000 from NPC's savings. The objective of the stucco campaign was to 'pay ourselves back' for the money we used from our savings.

Moving forward, we will still be making regular, monthly mortgage payments for the next 14 years on our low-interest loan from the Philadelphia Presbytery. Your generous involvement and financial gifts have ensured that our building can continue to support our missions and programs now and in the future!

Mission Update

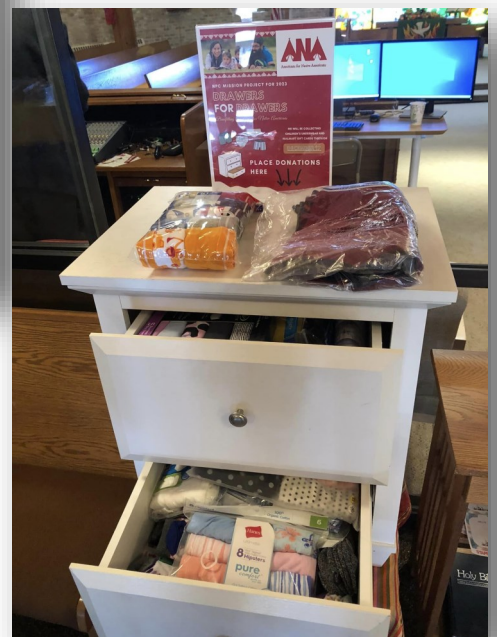
By: Pam Kemper

From the Mission Team

We would like to begin by thanking everyone for the support we have received for our "Reservation Christmas" project. This was a joint NPC/GW project with God's Window's Kids Helping Kids collection and NPC's Drawers for Drawers. The Kids Helping Kids project ended at Thanksgiving with four large boxes of small toys and games generously donated by the preschool families and friends. The Drawers for Drawers dresser is overflowing with brand-new packages of underwear and Walmart gift cards. But there is always room for more with the collection continuing through December 17th. (Walmart gift cards may also be sent or dropped off in the church office.) Thank you!

The Mission team also partnered with our Care Team in early November to pack (and deliver) 72 Snack Bags for the Welcome Church, located in Center City. These bags are given to persons experiencing homelessness who attend the Welcome Church worship, bible studies and fellowship groups. They were thrilled to be able to re-stock their supplies as the cold weather sets in.

As we close out 2023, we are already beginning to plan and budget for the new year. In addition to our traditional mission support, we are hoping to expand the opportunities for hands-on mission projects. Stay tuned!



ORDER YOUR
CHRISTMAS
POINSETTIAS BY
DECEMBER 10TH.



\$10

SCAN TO ORDER
ONLINE



KIDS HELPING KIDS

During the month of November,
God's Window Preschool
collected toys for ANA
classrooms which will be used
for birthday gifts and
classroom rewards.





NPC MISSION PROJECT FOR 2023

DRAWERS FOR DRAWERS

Benefitting Americans for Native Americans



WE WILL BE COLLECTING
CHILDREN'S UNDERWEAR AND
WALMART GIFT CARDS THROUGH

DECEMBER 17

LOOK FOR THE DRESSER IN THE
NARTHEX!

A RESERVATION CHRISTMAS

Imagine visiting your neighborhood elementary school and asking a 4th grade class, "If you could receive anything you want, what would it be?" Would it be a bike, a Playstation or the latest "hot" sneakers... Now imagine asking the same question in a school on a Native American Reservation? The teachers did - and the answer was "Underwear!"

This is not just a story. This is the reality in the reservation schools where teachers and staff provide not just lessons, but food, clothing and other supplies that families cannot. Hands down, underwear is the most needed item and constantly requested by school staff. Ironically it is the most expensive to purchase. Frankly when families have to choose between underwear and food, food wins.

So, how can WE help? By helping Americans for Native Americans (ANA). Formed in 1991, ANA has been coming alongside the schools to help provide the supplies that they need. This Christmas, that is underwear for the kids and Walmart gift cards that will be used to purchase cleaning products to send home to the families.

Beginning now **through December 17th** we will be collecting NEW packages of **underwear (boys/girls) size 4 to 18-20.** These will be provided to students elementary through high school age. (For the larger sizes, solid colors are preferable.) **Walmart gift cards** may be purchased in any amount.



December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 COMMITMENT SUNDAY 10 AM Communion Worship Livestream & In-Person 11:30 AM Hanging of the Greens	4 6 PM Girl Scout Troop #2367	5 12 PM Advent Adult Study 6:15 PM BSA Troop Merit Badge 7 PM BSA Troop Mtgs	6 9:30 AM Mission Committee 6 PM CS Den #2—Wolves	7 7 PM Choir	8	9 9 AM Boy Scouts Leaf Collection
10 10 AM Sunday Worship Livestream & In-Person	11 6:30 PM CS Den #1—Tigers 7 PM CS Den #3—AOL	12 12 PM Advent Adult Study 6:15 PM BSA Troop Merit Badge 7 PM BSA Troop Mtgs 7 PM Worship Committee	13 8:30 AM Men's Breakfast at Robin Hood	14 7 PM Choir	15	16
17 10 AM Cantata Service Livestream & In-Person	18 6 PM Girl Scout Troop #2367 6:30 PM Boy Scouts Committees	19 12 PM Advent Adult Study 6:15 PM BSA Troop Merit Badge 7 PM BSA Troop Mtgs	20 5 PM GS Troop #2934	21 7 PM Choir	22	23
24 CHRISTMAS EVE 4 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Livestream & In-Person	25 CHRISTMAS DAY (Church Office Closed)	26 (Church Office Closed)	27 (Church Office Closed)	28 (Church Office Closed)	29 (Church Office Closed)	30
31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 4 PM Watch Night Service Livestream & In-Person	JAN 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY (Church Office Closed)	2 (Church Office Closed)	3 5 PM GS Troop #2934	4 7 PM Choir	5	6

Northampton Presbyterian Church

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