

Northfield Presbyterian Church

# The Good News

February 2024

## Chocolate and Ashes

One suggests indulgence; the other, death -not things we tend to put together.

Here we are, at the beginning of Lent. For as long as I can remember, I have heard that it is a good spiritual discipline to give something up for Lent. As a teenager trying to manage her weight, I usually gave up chocolate, and delved into that Cadbury Crème Egg first thing on Easter morning. As I got older, the object to be given up changed. One year I gave up television; one year I gave up swearing. (I have since gone back to both.)

And then at some point I started hearing that it is good to add something, to do something, as a spiritual discipline during Lent. So I read a daily devotion; I prayed for someone I didn't like (and realized that I had enough people to cover the whole of Lent.)

But for me, whether giving up something or adding something, I was always thinking about myself, and not about God or Christ. I would think about how hungry I was, or how noble I was in my sacrifice. It was about me, not about God, not about Jesus (who really knew hunger and really knew sacrifice.) So this year, for a lot of different reasons, I'm going to try a different kind of Lenten discipline, represented by the chocolate. What if this Lent, the discipline was each day to consider the sweetness of God. That could mean taking time to meditate each day on all that I'm grateful for; it might mean reading a psalm or something from scripture that tells of God's goodness to humanity.

What if the Lenten discipline were to have one piece of chocolate – good chocolate – or one sweet thing a day. Limiting it to one piece a day can be hard. Then again, having one good piece of chocolate a day might seem too indulgent for this austere season of Lent.

But what if, mid-afternoon or after dinner, I had one piece of chocolate, and really savored it, took time with it, tasted it freshly, noticed the hint of salt or chili or cinnamon that lies beneath. And what if, as I savor this chocolate, I remind myself of God's good intention for my life and for the world?

What if a piece of chocolate a day was my Lenten fast, my Lenten feast?

Because the ashes will always be there. There will always be reminders of death and decay.

We are confronted with our mortality all the time, as our bodies grow weary, as we lose people, as violence pervades the world. The ashes are there, and we can't run away from them, nor should we. We can't deny them. But we don't have to give them the only word, or the ultimate word.

So that's why the chocolate and ashes. To remember that even our mortality is surrounded by the love of God.

Rev. Beth Merrill Neel  
Westminster Presbyterian, Portland, OR  
- holdfasttowhatisgood.com

### FEBURARY 4

Preaching: Rev. Wally Scofield  
Communion Sunday

### FEBURARY 11

Preaching: Rev. Wally Scofield

### FEBURARY 16

Preaching: Rev. Wally Scofield  
First Sunday in Lent

### FEBURARY 25

Preaching: Rev. Missy Shiverick

## FROM THE SESSION

Summary of the Stated Session Meeting, January 8, 2024

1. Session welcomed its new member, Chris Fenn.
2. The 2023 Statistics Report was reviewed. At the end of 2023, membership was 79. This reflects a change of 17 from 2022, including 2 transfers, 1 death and 14 moved to inactive.
3. Session positions were elected for 2024. Kathy Moore will be Clerk, Michelle Williamson will be Clerk pro tem and Alan Gruber will serve as Treasurer.
4. The Finance Committee reported that we finished the year \$22,000 in the black, mostly due to savings in salary and benefits.
5. The Nominating Committee will meet to finalize the nominees for the Pastor Nominating Committee. Since we are looking for a Covenant Pastor, this committee will be selected by the Session instead of the congregation.
6. The new Moderator for future Session meetings will be Rev. Missy Shiverick. Rev Jim Butler will shift to become the moderator for the Pastor Nominating Committee, to guide them through the selection process.
7. Our Mission Study was approved unanimously by the Presbytery Committee on Worship on 1/2/24.

Minutes summary by Kathy Moore, Clerk

### ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS:

Newly installed for session are Chris Fenn, Karyl Neubauer, Michelle Williamson and Dylan Maholm.

Newly ordained deacons are Stacy Harber and Katie Williamson; Scott Williamson and Cindy Gallagher were installed.

Thank you for your willingness to serve!



### Calendar at a glance:

February 7--9:30 AM Property & Finance Meeting - library

February 11-11:30 AM Deacon's Meeting following worship

February 12 - 10 AM Women's Association Meeting

February 12 - 7 PM Session Meeting

February 27 - 5:30 PM Comforting Words - Women's Book Club

## Finance / Property / Stewardship Committee

NPC finished 2023 in the \$ black and now we need to keep the momentum going to support the hiring of a ½ time pastor and continue preserving our buildings and property correctly. Many congregants assist all of us by sharing their building repair, HVAC and property maintenance skills. We also require contractors for major projects such as parking lot repair. Rest assured this year NPC will continue to closely budget any capital improvement projects which must be completed.

Five of our NPC members and the Daycare staff participated in CPR certification this month. We want to increase our ability to help one another in case of an emergency during our worship and meeting times. A component of helping one another is the creation of the Emergency Contact Form kept securely on file at the church.

### Question:

Have you completed the Emergency Contact Form? Please pick up a form on the table in the narthex. You can place the completed form in an offering plate in a secure envelope labeled “Emergency Contact Form” or mail back to the church. Your information is being kept securely in a fireproof, waterproof locked case to only be opened in case of need during an emergency.

If anyone missed receiving the NPC 2023 Annual Report, please contact Karyl Neubauer directly and she will be sure you receive one at your home address.

Peace and Blessings to each of you—Stay Safe!

Members of the  
Finance/Property/Stewardship Committee



Katie Williamson	1st
Pauline Enczur	2nd
Donna Hamed	4th
Kathy Moore	4th
Joyce Selzer	9th
Marie Fiala	10th
Jeanne Swanson	13th
Abby Williamson	15th
Bart Benjamin	17th

## COLLEGE / MILITARY GIFT CARDS:

The Deacon's Board will be sending gift cards to college students and military families in March.

If you have a college student or child in the military, please share their names and address with the office.

If you would like to contribute to the cost of the cards to let these young people know we're thinking about them, please write Deacon's Gift Card on your envelope.

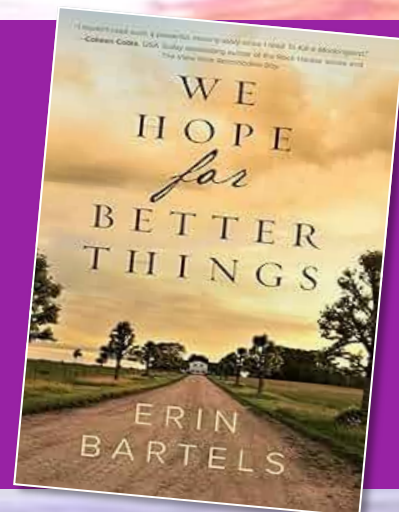
Thank you.

## COMFORTING WORDS - Our Christian Women's Book Club

### We Hope for Better Things by Erin Bartels

This fictional tale takes Elizabeth Balsam on a family search through actual historical times to which you are sure to relate.

Ladies, come meet with the group on Tuesday, February 27, 5:30, at NPC for this inspiring book's discussion.





# February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7pm Choir 8pm AA	2	3
4 <b>Communion</b> 10:15 Worship 12:30 VBC Worship	5	6	7 9:30am Property & Finance meeting	8 7pm Choir 8pm AA	9	10
11 10:15 Worship Deacons meeting 12:30 VBC Worship	12 10am Women's Association 7pm Session	13	14 <b>Ash Wednesday</b>	15 7pm Choir 8pm AA	16	17
18 10:15 Worship 12:30 VBC Worship	19	20	21	22 7pm Choir 8pm AA	23	24
25 10:15 Worship 12:30 VBC Worship	26	27 5:30 pm Women's Book Club	28	29 7pm Choir 8pm AA		

## Mission Committee News

### Northfield Presbyterian 2024 Mission Budget

RAHAB Ministries	1,000
Local Mission Projects	300
TEAC	1,000
North Church (2 Sunday Meals)	800
Nordonia Hills Refugee Family	2,400
Nordonia Hills Senior Meals	<u>1,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,500</b>

*Do not neglect to do good  
and to share what you have,  
for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.  
Hebrews 13:16*



2.5% of all 2024 tithing dollars received will be placed into the church's Mission Fund

The Nordonia Hills Senior Meals Program now serves 150 homebound senior and disabled local citizens every Tues and Thursday. Each month a greater percentage of the recipients are with limited financial resources slightly above, at or below the poverty level. They are in financial distress which often is not eligible for federal or state assistance. The City of Macedonia is assisting residents in Macedonia, Northfield, Northfield Village, Northfield Center, Sagamore Hills and the borders of Boston Hts and Twinsburg.

PLEASE—pray for the health of all the residents served by this food program.

December 2023, The Emergency Assistance Center (TEAC) served 601 people in our immediate communities. That was sufficient food for 12,621 meals.

There are specific needed items which public assistance and the SNAP program do not cover.

Our Women's Association has identified this need. Please - take a copy of the monthly calendar of gifting on the table in the narthex.

You can help the women, men and children in need by donating items highlighted each month.


**February**  
Incontinence Underwear  
Men's XXL  
Women's Medium

TEAC is currently in the process of moving to its new location:  
9433 Olde Eight Rd. Suite B.

They are scheduled to re-open  
Monday, February 5th.

Current updates are available  
on their facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/teacenter/>



## 12 MONTHS OF CARING


Women's Association Monthly Collections

The Women's Association will be collecting the items below each month. We plan to buy in bulk, if possible, so if you would prefer to donate cash, we will take those funds and purchase the items each month at Sam's or Costco. Please feel free to donate smaller packages and place your donated items in the blue bin in the Narthex.

Any cash donations should be marked "Women's Association" and may be placed in separate envelopes in the Collection Plates or the Mailbox on the wall outside the church entrance.

<b>January</b> Pullups - Toddler size 4T-5T (pull-up diapers)	<b>July</b> Pet Food and Supplies Canned or Bags <small>(large bags will be divided up)</small>
<b>February</b> Incontinence Underwear Men's XXL Women's Medium	<b>August</b> Diapers and Wipes All sizes
<b>March</b> Paper Goods: Toilet Paper Paper Towels, Kleenex	<b>September</b> Home Cleaning Products Sprays, Liquids Brooms, Brushes
<b>April</b> Personal Hygiene Shampoo, Body Wash, Soap	<b>October</b> Deodorants, Shaving Products for Men and Women
<b>May</b> Denture Tabs, Floss Toothbrushes, Toothpaste	<b>November</b> Kitchen Disposables Foil, Cling Wrap, Baggies
<b>June</b> Feminine Hygiene Pads and Tampons	<b>December</b> Paper Plates and Napkins Containers for leftovers

**Thanks for helping!**



**THE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE CENTER**  
*Love Your Neighbor*

## Easter Flowers Order Form

Spring will be here soon and with it the season of rebirth and renewal. Easter is on March 31st. It is time for the Deacons to place our order for Easter flowers. The flowers listed below are available for purchase.

The cost is \$11 for a 6 ½" foil wrapped pot.

All orders must be received in the church office by Wednesday, March 6th.

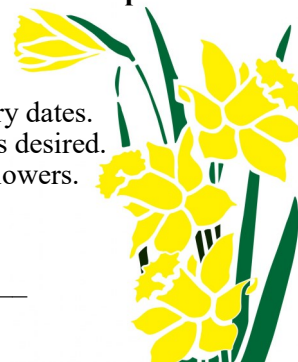
The order will be placed with the greenhouse the following day to assure pricing and delivery dates.

Please indicate your choice of flower, circle color preference, and mark the number of plants desired.

Checks should be made payable to Northfield Presbyterian Church and marked for Easter Flowers.

Cash payments should be placed in an envelope and also marked Easter Flowers.

Payment must accompany all orders.



Easter Lilies \_\_\_\_\_

Tulips (red, pink, or yellow) \_\_\_\_\_

Daffodils \_\_\_\_\_

Hyacinths (Blue or Pink) \_\_\_\_\_

Pansy Baskets (Assorted Colors in one basket) \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Taking flowers home? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Cash ( ) Check ( ) Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Flowers marked for take home should be picked up after the 10:15am service on Easter Sunday. All other flowers will be distributed to those who are ill or home-bound. Please mark your order form appropriately.



## **PRESBYTERY of the Western Reserve EVENTS**

**Black History Month - Two congregations in the presbytery have scheduled events:**

**Forest Hill Presbyterian Church** (3031 Monticello Blvd., Cleveland Hts., 216-321-2660)  
the following events open to the public:

**February 4 - Family Fun Movie Night 4:00-6 pm The Little Mermaid (PG)**

**February 11 - Fruits of the Spirit Reveal 12:30-2 pm** (Interactive skit, reveal & discussion featuring Forest Hill members).

**February 18 - Soul Food Potluck 3:30-7 pm Meats provided.** Bring your favorite side dish or dessert to the potluck & share the love as Black culture is celebrated.

**February 25 - A Time for Joy: Annual African-American music celebration, 6:30-9 pm** featuring Alexander Wright, sterling Cozza, Griffin Fink & Gabriel P. Jones. There will be a bake sale before and after the concert.

**John Knox Presbyterian Church** (25200 Lorain Road North Olmsted, 440-777-3744)

is hosting **Saturday Matinees (1:30 - 4 pm)** with time for discussion following each film as part of their Black History Month offerings. The films were chosen with great care and each represents a significant and historic facet of life as a person of color in America.

Snacks and beverages will be available.

**Feb10 - "Harriet" PG-13; Feb 17- "Loving" PG-13; Feb 24 - "Just Mercy" PG-13**

# AT THE DAYCARE...

## We care about our neighbors!

Each year, the School-Age and Kindergarten before and after-school classes do a Community Outreach Project.

This year, the kids held an "Art Auction" to raise money to benefit the Emergency Assistance Center. Each child colored drawings of a character from their favorite book. Parents donated toward their child's picture.

Over \$170 was raised for The Emergency Assistance Center!

Great work, Kids!



**A NEW FUNDRAISER...FOR THE DAYCARE  
FEBRUARY 20TH...Is a Great Day for Chick-fil-a!  
Day care fundraiser all day 6 am to 10 pm.**



Mention the fundraiser and our day care gets 15%. No flyer necessary.  
PLUS: Spin-the-Wheel..5-7pm \$1 donation gets a spin to win free food!

## Coming Soon! Pre-School Registration

We are happy to announce that we will once again be starting our Pre-K 4's and Preschool 3's program this fall. Enrollment for these classes begins February 1st. Registration forms are available in the Daycare office or at the Day-care website: [www.npcdc.com](http://www.npcdc.com)



**February 14th  
Valentine's Day  
and Lent begins.**