




Northwood Presbyterian Church
 2875 State Road 580
 Clearwater, FL 33761
 A Stephen Ministry Congregation

**DO NOT DELAY
 TIME VALUE DATA
 EXPEDITE!!!**

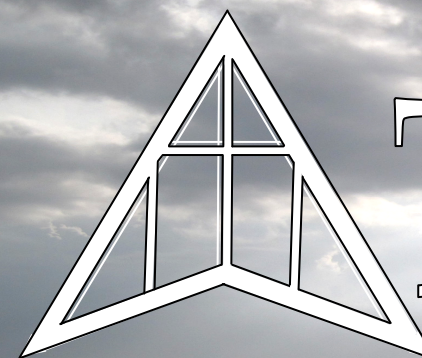
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Sent with Prayer to...



**Merry
 Christmas and
 Happy 2015!!**

From Your
 Northwood Staff,



The Window

Northwood Presbyterian Church

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

December 16, 2014
 Volume 24, No. 11

2875 State Road 580, Clearwater, FL 33761
 727-796-8090 Main Office ~ 727-723-7679 Preschool, Before & After Care
 www.northwoodpc.org

**December 24
 Christmas Eve
 Candlelight Services**
 (all Services are Candlelight Services)

4:30 pm
 Children's Pageant & Puppets
 (Nursery available)

7:30 pm
 Carols & Choirs
 (Nursery available)

11:00 pm
 Lessons & Carols
 with Holy Communion

**Church Office
 Closed for Christmas**

The Church Office will be closed at noon on Wednesday, December 24th. The Office will remain Closed Thursday, December 25th and Friday, December 26th.

**Church Office
 Closed for New Years**

The Church Office will be closed at noon Wednesday, December 31st and will re-open again on Monday, January 5th!

Matters Financial

It is always our goal to process your gifts to the church with the utmost accuracy, integrity and confidentiality. Every effort is made to accurately record and report your giving to Northwood. However, near year-end, it can become challenging. For example, during the last six weeks of the year we generally receive the regular tithes and offerings, alternative gifts, the Christmas Joy offering (December 21st) and offerings to the Helping Hands Fund (Christmas Eve). All gifts received on Christmas Eve are presumed to be for the Helping Hands Fund and must be marked otherwise if that is not your intent. We are grateful for your generous giving, and any information you clearly provide will help direct your gift.

As a reminder, gifts to be counted as 2014 contributions for tax purposes must be received before the church office closes at noon on December 31st. Checks mailed should be dated December 31st or before and should be postmarked no later than December 31st. Contributions made online/electronically must be processed and posted to our account by December 31st to be deductible in the current year and need to be initiated much earlier (probably no later than December 26th). The e-giving option can be found on the NPC website via the "Give" link at the top of the home page. Gifts of stock for 2014 must also be transferred prior to December 31st. Please contact the Church Office as soon as possible if you are planning a year-end stock gift.

Offering envelopes for 2015 are now available in the hall by the kitchen. Boxes are not numbered or labeled; you may take any one. Please remember that when making "Cash" contributions, include your first and last name on the envelope to be sure it is accurately recorded. In our continuing efforts to reduce the number of envelope sets that are wasted each year as more people choose online giving, we are again using perpetual envelopes. The individual envelopes in the box are marked for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th Sunday of each month rather than being dated. Envelopes for the 5th Sunday, if needed, are at the back of the box.

Finally, more of you are beginning to give online. If you are interested in setting up online giving, visit the "Give" link to the secure portal at the top of our homepage at www.northwoodpc.org or call the Church Office.

The chart below shows the current status of pledges for 2014. At this time last year income was behind by approximately \$40,000 and was ultimately caught up in such a way that income exceeded expenses. Thank you for helping us catch up! We have also received approximately \$40,000 toward 2015 Building Renovations. As always, thank you for your continued and faithful support of the ministry and mission of Northwood Presbyterian Church.

Current Budget 2014 Pledge and Contribution Update as of December 9, 2014

	Expected 2014 Amount	Received To Date	Balance Outstanding
Pledge Contributions	\$533,000.00	\$455,644.00	\$77,356.00
Non-Pledge Contributions	\$98,000.00	\$89,750.00	\$8,250.00
2014 Balance Outstanding			\$85,606.00

At A Glance

December 16, 2014

This Month at Northwood

Sunday, December 21st: Fourth Sunday in Advent Christmas Cantata

8:15 AM Traditional Service
9:30 AM IGNITE Service
11:00 AM Traditional Service

Wednesday, December 24th:

Church Office Closed at Noon
4:30 PM Family Service & Pageant
7:30 PM Traditional Service
11:00 PM Communion Service

Thursday, December 25th:

Church Office Closed

Friday, December 26th:

Church Office Closed

Sunday, December 28th:

8:15 Traditional Service
9:30 IGNITE Service
11:00 Traditional Service

Wednesday, December 31st:

Church Office Closed at Noon

Thursday, January 1st:

Church Office Closed

Sunday, January 4th:

8:15 Traditional Service
9:30 IGNITE Service
11:00 Traditional Service

Friday, January 16th & Saturday, January 17th:

Annual Church Garage Sale

Sunday, January 11th:

8:15 Traditional Service
9:30 IGNITE Service
11:00 Traditional Service

Matters Financial	1
Christmas Eve Worship Schedule	1
At A Glance	2
Unwrapping Christmas	3
Christian Education	4
Youth & Young Adults	4
Children's Ministry	5
Music Ministry	5
What's Happening?	6
Vitals	7
Thanks from the Mission Field	7
Caring for Our Church	7
Merry Christmas-Staff Greeting!	8

The Window

Published monthly by Northwood Presbyterian Church
Edited by Katie Pacana

Submissions:

If you have information that you would like to be considered for the newsletter, e-mail Katie@northwoodpc.org, or place it in Katie Pacana's box in the church office. The deadline is the 2nd Monday of the month.

E-News:

If you are interested in receiving the bi-weekly Monitor via our e-news system, please send an email with your name and request to Katie@northwoodpc.org.

For more information about The Presbytery of Tampa Bay go to www.presbyteryoftampabay.com or about The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) go to www.pcusa.org.

From the PASTOR'S DESK

Rev. E. Chris Curvin, Pastor

Dear Members and Friends of Northwood,

Many of you have mentioned to me how much you appreciate and enjoy the devotion book compiled by Katie Pacana, our Director of Communications, with devotions written by members of our staff and congregation. Re-printed here are two devotions written by our young adults. I think you will agree that they could be reflected upon again and again at Advent and throughout the year. Merry Christmas!

Pastor Chris

December 21, 2014, Luke 1:26-38

It's easy to think of the Christmas story merely as a joyful pageant. There are all the elements of a celebration: angels, miracles, and best of all, Jesus. The light overshadows the dark, and good forever conquers evil. But I imagine that despite Mary's humble acceptance of Gabriel's message, she must have felt confused and perhaps even betrayed by her Lord. It's difficult to imagine the righteous Mary as a girl, but she was indisputably young. Contemporarily, she'd be another teen pregnancy statistic. In a society where women were valued for their virtue, Mary's mysterious pregnancy could lead her neighbors and family to shun or perhaps even disown her. Mary must have known the hardship stemming from Gabriel's news, but nevertheless accepted his message.

As a college senior, I've tried to plan my life—I've envisioned my career, my house, and even my wedding dress. I imagine Mary had similar aspirations for her life with Joseph. Certainly they must have included pregnancy, but surely not before marriage. Gabriel's message shattered any plans she treasured. Her growing stomach wouldn't fit into her wedding dress. Her family and friends might ostracize her. Her relationship with Joseph would be forever changed. But Mary accepted the transformative news, responding that "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." (Luke 38) In this, as in many ways, we should follow Mary's exemplum. God's plans may not mirror our plans, but we should respond with acceptance, not denial or dismay.

PRAYER:

Dear God, please help me to accept your plan for me. Let your will be my will. Like Mary, let me love your plan and live it fully. Amen.

Kathleen O'Leary
College Senior, Member

December 24, 2014, Matthew 4:14-16

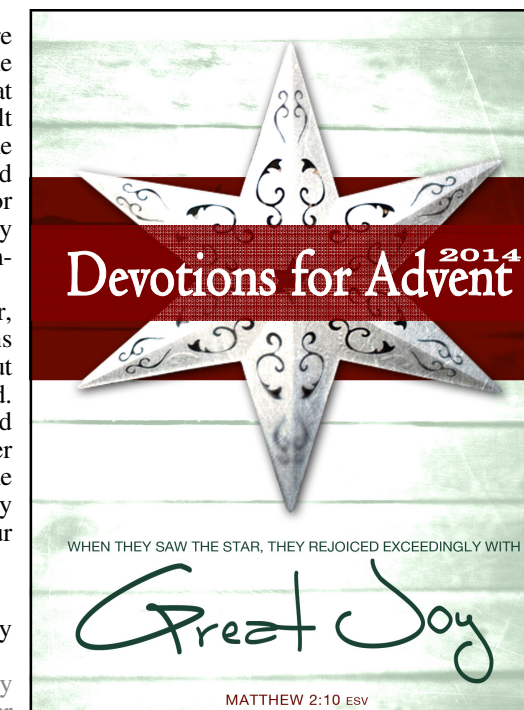
It's another overcast day in downtown Clearwater, when... Wham! Cue the bright lights and show choir singing *Forgiveness*. Okay, maybe God's salvation isn't always a Hollywood blockbuster in the literal sense; however, the light of Christ shines within everyone who welcomes Him. Before Jesus came down to redeem us, darkness relentlessly tried to blot out all of God's prophetic and holy beacons. That gloom did a decent job getting even righteous King David to falter. But don't despair, God's Light masterfully enacted a counterattack rekindling the lights. The Old Testament is a constant battle between the extinguishers and candle lighters with a colorful character cast, expected promises, and twisted storylines that rival any Hollywood summer thriller. In contrast to all the violent thrillers, there are no broken promises as God fulfills them all. God's light not only fulfilled what He promised, but established hope for the future. I just love movies where the good guys emerge victorious.

The luminosity found in Christ Jesus' sacrifice is unrivaled by any combination of natural and unnatural lights. Many times I have sat on a rugged, blue couch overlooking a tranquil boomerang lake pondering the depth of salvation. Without realizing it, this spot reflects the eternal flame God offers. How, you ask? The boomerang shape and durability of the couch both remind me of God's forgiveness, always coming back to me as much as I tend to throw it away. God's wonderful love through His Son can be expressed in everyday objects we would scarcely consider religious-affiliated.

PRAYER:

Father, thank you for your love and the light of Christ to direct our path. Help us to recognize Christ's light in even the smallest of things. We ask through Jesus, our Light and Salvation. Amen.

Robert Wood
High School Junior, Member



Christian Education

Joan Baker, Christian Education Team Chair

Youth Events

There will be no scheduled weekly events through the remainder of the year. Youth Group will resume January 4th. Check the weekly bulletin, bi-weekly Monitor, and your e-mail for more youth news.

Sunday School

Every Sunday at 9:30 am and 11:00 am in the Youth Room. Join us before or after the service at which you worship!

*Troy Harris, Director of
Youth & Young Adults
troyharris1962@yahoo.com, 366-7762*

Christmas Joy Offering December 21

On December 21st we will receive the annual Christmas Joy Offering. Your gifts make a difference in providing financial assistance to current and former church workers and their families and in opportunities for deserving students to attend Presbyterian-related racially ethnic colleges and schools. Your generous support of the Christmas Joy Offering will make a difference in shining the One True Light of Christ's love.

EDUCATION MINISTRY FOR ALL AGES

8:15 AM CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
3 Yr. Olds-5th Grade (14/15 School Year), **Room 3**, join us in the multi-age Sunday School worship class after the Children's Message.

9:30 AM CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
3 Yr. Olds-Kindergarten (14/15 School Year), **Room 3**
1st & 2nd Grades, **Rooms 16**

Students gather to worship at the beginning of the service with their teachers, in the front Sanctuary rows, closest to the band. After the Prayers of Joys & Concerns, they will move to **Room 16**.
3rd-5th Grades, **Room 8**

11:00 AM CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
3 Yr. Olds – 5th grade (14/15 school year) join us as we bring the Bible to Action through games and activities in **Room 3** beginning at 11:00 am. Should your child like to attend service up until the Children's message, they can join in the fun in room 3 after the Children's Message or stay in worship with their parents.

Parents, if you wish for your children to receive communion, please have them remain with you in the worship service on Communion Sundays. If you have any questions regarding the process, please contact Elder Jackie Koski (jackieandjerry@verizon.net), Chair of Worship Team.

Middle & High School Christian Education
Come join us for combined middle/high school Sunday school. We will be studying the "Elements" of our faith. Through new and exciting curriculum, we will learn how to grow in our walk with God.

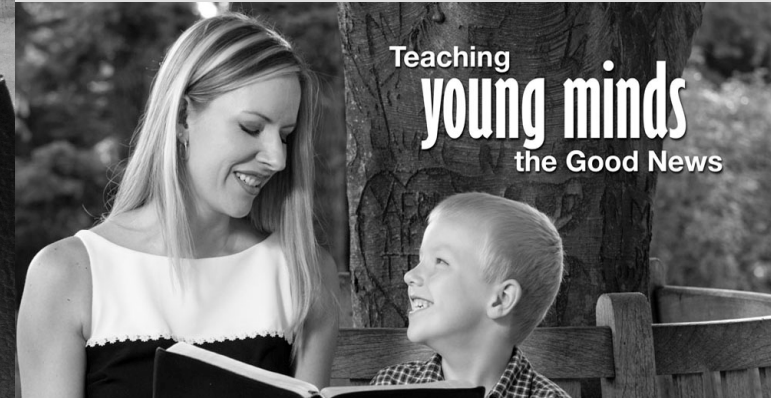
9:30 AM	Youth Room
11:00 AM	Youth Room

9:30 AM ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
SERENDIPITY—Rooms 13 & 15
Join us as we study different Biblical Figures each week! Coffee and cookies are provided!

TCI (Today's Christian Issues)—Rooms 9 & 11
The TCI class is filled with great discussion based on current events. We invite you to join us each Sunday as we take on a new current issue. Coffee and cookies will enhance the conversation.

11:00 AM ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

EXPERIENCING GOD – Rooms 13 & 15
Led by Vicki Krueger.



11:00 am Adult Sunday school

Parents did you know that you can attend the Experiencing God class at 11:00 am? While you are Experiencing God your children will be busy bringing the Bible to Action through games and activities in room 3. Come check out what the 11:00 am hour has for you and your children.

Upcoming Children's Events

Please stop by the Children's Ministry bulletin board and look at the upcoming events!

Kids & Youth Wanted

Do you play a Musical Instrument? Kids and youth (ages 1st grade through 12th grade), come play your instrument on Christmas Eve... your gift to the Lord! If you have a sacred song to play during our pre-service concert at 4:10 pm, please contact Justine Ruisz.

Children's Ministry

King's Kids

King's Kids resumes on Wednesday, January 21st, from 4:00 – 6:00 pm.

Sunday School Classes

Please see the Sunday School Class information on Page 4 under Christian Education.

Justine Ruisz,
Director of Children's Ministry
childrensministry@northwoodpc.org
727-796-8090



Annual Church-Wide Garage Sale

The yearly yard sale benefitting Northwood's Music Ministry will be on TWO days this year; January 16th and 17th, and we need your donations! I know people are purging at the end of the year, and we hope to benefit from the items you no longer want or need.

We are in need of items for the following categories: housewares, electronics, furniture, oldies but goodies (collectibles), jewelry, books/DVD's/puzzles, children's items, clothing, linens, hardware, bikes, pictures, holiday decorations, tools, sporting equipment – nearly anything you could think of –EXCEPT: entertainment centers, older TV's (unless it's a flat screen), old computers, treadmills or very large exercise equipment, ripped/stained clothing, anything not in working condition, or items too heavy for our pick up team. We could use your hangers and plastic shopping bags also, all sizes. We will provide donation receipts.

We also need volunteers to work. Some of our 'regular team' are unable to assist this year so we really need you. Please either sign up on the bulletin board and we will contact you, or email me stephanie@northwoodpc.org. It is so much fun to fellowship while you sort and organize and a great way to plug yourself in.

Please save your items to drop off between January 4-16. If you have need of an earlier drop off time, call Susan Curry (727) 709-8237 for off-site storage.

Stephanie Carson and the Yard Sale Team

Ring, Sing, & Mingle Thank You!

Our Fourth Annual "Ring, Sing, & Mingle" event was a JOY—to rehearse, to present, to hear, to participate and to fellowship. We sang carols and experience the beauty of the bells in slow lovely carol arrangements as well as those that were more up-tempo and rhythmic. We also enjoyed the flute, piano, tambourine, triangle accompaniment and the majesty of the organ.

Thank you to everyone who participated! So much hard work went in the presentation alone, but behind the scenes was bell polishing, bell set-up and tear-down, and the 'mingle' portion with another set-up and tear-down along with baking. Many others generously contributed food which went quickly. Christmas love and cooperation was experienced and enabled so many to experience Jesus at NPC.

Thank you choir and congregation for giving and attending and participating. Merry Christmas Everyone!
Stephanie Carson and Tom Huffman



What's Happening?



Caring for Our Church Family

Annual Congregational Meeting & Potluck Lunch January 25th at Noon

Mark your calendars for Sunday, January 25th. It's the Annual Congregational Meeting and Church-wide Potluck. The Meeting starts at 12:00 pm and the Potluck lunch will follow. At the meeting we will hear reports from the Session, the Deacons and their ministry Teams. We will also be electing new officers, as the Officer Nominating Committee brings its nominations. Look for luncheon sign-up in upcoming bulletins & on the bulletin board outside the kitchen.

KID'S CORNER NEWS

What a wonderful year it has been for the Northwood Schools Programs. Kid's Corner expanded by adding a 5 day 3 yr. old program, in room 16. It used to be Mr. Bill's Sunday School Room, so stop by and see it on Sunday. We continue to operate as a "Gold Seal Quality School", (a Florida State designation) with all student slots filled and we're still getting phone calls as new families move into the area. For the month of November, our parents donated about 35 grocery bags of food for the food pantry. Our VPK program, which is operated by the Florida Department of Education, is still performing in the top 5% of the State. Our Northwood Child Care program that takes care of children from Leila Davis Elementary is operating at full capacity. We started the year with a wait list of 20 and still have people calling. We are so very grateful for God's blessings this year and we want to thank the congregation for your support. Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas from the staff at Northwood Schools.

Annual Report Deadline January 5th by Noon

To the Session, Committees, Pastors & Staff, Please note that the deadline to submit your Annual Report is Monday, January 6th by noon. Please submit your electronic copy to Katie Pacana (Katie@Northwoodpc.org). If you have any questions, please contact the church office. Thank you, Katie

Grief Recovery and God's Grace

Beginning Wednesday, January 7th and continuing through Wednesday, February 11, Pastor Paul will lead a six-week educational seminar and support group for persons who are experiencing grief due to death, a life-threatening illness or some other life circumstance. This is not a group therapy program, so while active participation is encouraged, it is not required. The cost for materials is \$25. For more information, please contact Pastor Paul at (727)796-8090 or paul@northwoodpc.org.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS January 18, 2014 at 11:00 am

The next Discovering Northwood class is **January 18th in room 4** of the Christian Education Building **from 11:00 am—12:00 pm**. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the pastor, Rev. E. Chris Curvin, at ChrisCurvin@Northwoodpc.org. Pastor Chris can be reached at the church office, 796-8090.

2015 Women's Retreat!!

Does simply thinking about chocolate bring a smile to your face? Then join us and our speaker, Jennifer Weldon, at Café Chocolat for the 2015 Women's Retreat at Cedarkirk on Feb. 6-8. Information can be found on the bulletin board across from the water fountain. Mark your calendars and sign up TODAY!

Food Pantry Request

Requests are high for food pantry items and supplies are low. Please help by donating canned or jarred food like meats (especially ham and chicken), beef stew, corned beef hash, chili, spaghetti sauce, canned pastas, fruit, vegetables, baked beans, chunky soups, peanut butter, and jelly. Donation baskets are located in the hallways. To make a monetary donation, please indicate "Food Pantry" on your check and place it in the offering plate. For information, contact Pat Rabenstine at 727-785-5080.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Ken Andreassen; Burt & Dottie Benziger; Larry Cornillaud; Kimberly Corrello; Doris Croasmun; Jean Dayes; Shirley Gleason; Hugh Gott; Fred Inkles; Rees Heycock; Lou Hortobagyi; Kelly Jordan; Jane Kaempfer; Diane Luke; Lois Marsh; Mildred Martin; Robin MacLennan; Major Brendan McEvoy; Curtis McLeod; Helen Meier; Norman Phillips; Marian & Walter Rather; Barbara Smith; David Smith; Charline Snow; Gene Snyder; Lucille Talbot; Barbara Yontek.

Please keep the following who are serving in the military in your prayers. Addresses have been included should you wish to send cards of support.

Capt. Daniel Doverspike
2044 Pratt Court
Evanston, Illinois 60201-3116

Our thoughts & prayers go out to:

- Ann Lanning and family upon news of the death of Ann's mother, May, who died Thursday, November 20, 2014.
- The family and friends of Barbara Smith who died December 1, 2014.

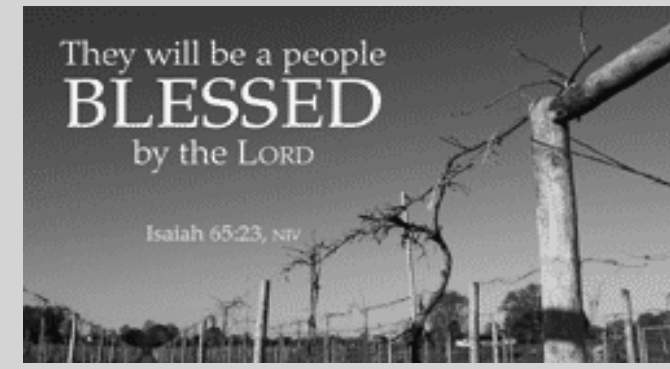
MEMORIAL GIFTS

<u>In Memory of:</u> <i>Jean DeFilippo</i>	<u>Given by:</u> <i>Bill & Bunny Bitner</i>
<u>In Honor of:</u> <i>Amy Guthrie</i>	<u>Given by:</u> <i>Lorrie Janusik</i>

VITALS

Weather: Foggy & Cool
December 7, 2014

(8:15)	118
(9:30)	118
(11:00)	134
Total:	370



Thanks From the Mission Field

<p>HEP</p> <p>Dear Northwood, On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors at Homeless Emergency Project, Inc., I gratefully acknowledge the gift of \$382.00. Sincerely, Terrance McAbee President & CEO</p>	<p>Shriners Hospital</p> <p>Dear Northwood, On behalf of the Shriners Hospitals for Children-Tampa, I would like to thank you for the generous donation of can tabs on 11/24/14. Although they might seem small, the can tabs quickly add up and bring thousands of dollars each year to support the Shriners Hospitals for Children mission. Sincerely, Jeannette Skinner Administrator</p>	<p>Bay Area Pregnancy Center</p> <p>Dear Northwood, We received your check for the 4th quarter of this year. Thank you for your continued faithful support. Your help allows us to help many young women and their families. As always, we share our knowledge of Christ with every client. Marsha Rimer Executive Director</p>	<p>Beth-El</p> <p>Dear Northwood, Through donations such as yours we are able to assist the local Hispanic farmworker community. Thank you for your donation of \$250 and hundreds of blankets. Your donations are quite important to those we serve! Blessings, Dave Moore Executive Director</p>	<p>Presbyterian World Mission</p> <p>Dear Fellow Partners in Mission, Thank you for your gift of \$250.00 for the missionaries you support. You are a valued partner in mission. In Christ, Chris Roseland, Church Support Advocate</p>
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