

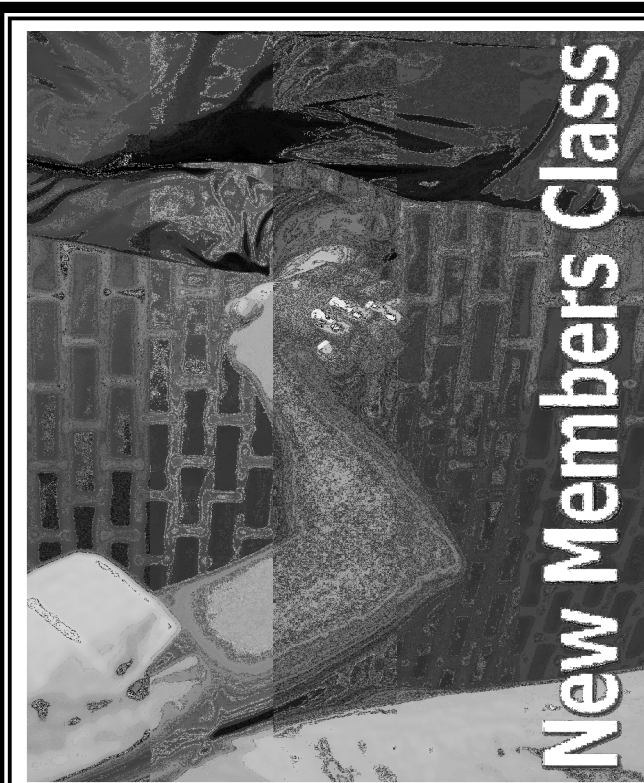


Northwood Presbyterian Church
 2875 State Road 580
 Clearwater, FL 33761
 A Stephen Ministry Congregation

**DO NOT DELAY
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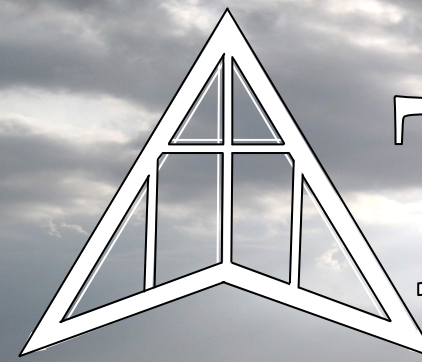
New Members Class

Are You New to Northwood?

Join us for our Discovering Northwood Class on Sunday, January 19th at 10:45 am in room 4. We meet one Sunday and discuss what it means to be a Presbyterian, the diversity of our Church, the role of membership, and more.

If you have any questions or would like to talk more about becoming a member of Northwood, please contact Pastor Chris Curvin at curvin@northwoodpc.org or the Membership Coordinator, Katie Pacana at katie@Northwoodpc.org. Both Pastor Chris and Katie can be reached at the church office, 796-8090.

We hope to see you there!



The Window
 Northwood Presbyterian Church

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

December 17, 2013
 Volume 23, No. 12

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 Tuesday, December 24th. The Office will remain Closed Wednesday, December 25th and Thursday, December 26th.

**Church Office Closed for
 New Years**

The Church Office will be closed at noon Tuesday, December 31st and all day Wednesday, January 1st. The Office will re-open again, Thursday, January 2nd!

Merry Christmas!!

From Your Northwood Staff,

Linda O'Saug *Mr. Fisher*
Chris Hight *Justo Rios*
Stephanie Carson
Marcy Kemmer *Paul Means* *Tom Hoffman*
Katrina Pacana **JEFF MOSSOLLE**

At A Glance

December 17, 2013

This Month at Northwood

Sunday, December 22nd:
Fourth Sunday in Advent~Love
 8:15 AM Traditional Service
 9:30 AM IGNITE Service
 11:00 AM Traditional Service

Tuesday, December 24th:
 Church Office Closed at Noon
 4:30 PM Family Service & Pageant
 7:30 PM Traditional Service
 11:00 PM Communion Service

Wednesday, December 25th:
 Church Office Closed

Thursday, December 26th:
 Church Office Closed

Sunday, December 29th:
 8:15 Traditional Service
 9:30 IGNITE Service
 11:00 Traditional Service

Tuesday, December 31st:
 Church Office Closed at Noon

Wednesday, January 1st:
 Church Office Closed

Sunday, January 5th:
 8:15 Traditional Service
 9:30 IGNITE Service
 11:00 Traditional Service

Friday, January 10th & Saturday, January 11th:
 Annual Church Garage Sale

Sunday, January 12th:
 8:15 Traditional Service
 9:30 IGNITE Service
 11:00 Traditional Service

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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.

From the PASTOR'S DESK

Rev. E. Chris Curvin, Pastor

"Unwrapping Christmas"

"...You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12)



Dear Members and Friends of Northwood,

For years I did not have any idea what swaddling cloths were. Without being too lighthearted let me suggest that these were sort of the first Christmas wrappings! A baby in a manger wrapped in swaddling cloths, it is fascinating to me to find such detail described in the birth of our Lord. Why should the angel mention them at all? If you were a good newspaper reporter of the news at Christmas, and you wanted to cut something out, what would it be? Keep the baby in the report of course, keep the stable, keep the star, keep the shepherds but surely you can cut out writing about the swaddling cloths! They don't seem to me to add anything to the story or to the child's identity.

Perhaps this is one of the problems of Christmas. I hear people often say at this time of the year how all the "extras" get in the way of celebrating the reason of this season. Don't get me wrong on this point. I love Santa Claus and Christmas trees, all the lights and homes decorated, white snow and all the carols and candle light services we enjoy, electric trains and chocolate covered cherries. I could go on and on! I also like to give and receive presents and gather at grandma's house in St. Petersburg, or in Soddy-Daisy when we can get there. However, all these things, as wonderful as they are, and they are wonderful, are not the child. Sometimes the wrappings of Christmas can become like, well... "swaddling cloths." They can cover up the new born baby with so many details that we can miss the child if we are not careful. As we finish the journey of the celebration of Christmas let us be careful not to major in wrappings and minor in content when December 25th has come and gone!

Let us see the need to "unwrap Christmas" anytime we make our outer selves more important than our inner lives. Jesus came to call us to improve our inner life didn't he? He calls us to value love, compassion and courage and trust in God. Remember he said it this way, "What does it profit a man (or woman) if they gain the whole world and lose their soul?" Surely the message of Christmas is that we need to be made new on the inside and that all the outside things, as lovely as they are, are just wrappings in the end.

Let me end this Christmas letter by letting you know that I do now know what the swaddling cloths are. I did find out. They are "narrow strips of cloth wrapped around an infant to restrict movement." It seems to me that even at birth there was an effort, (so to speak), to restrict and restrain Jesus. Remember this Christmas that neither his birth cloths nor the linen cloths wrapped around Jesus at his burial could restrain him! Remember the Gospel of John records that when John and Peter went running to the tomb, afraid that someone had stolen Jesus' body, that all they saw were the linen cloths, folded and laid aside. They were only bindings and wrappings. Herod couldn't stop him at his birth, nor Pilate, nor Caiaphas, nor Roman soldiers; not even a rock in front of his tomb could stop him. He got out, and continues to be born in us.

May our prayer this Christmas be, "Come into my heart, Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for Thee." With Jesus Christ all of life is colorful and bright. Without Him, all of life is empty boxes and torn paper. That's what it means to me to unwrap Christmas.

Your pastor and friend,
 Chris Curvin

Christian Education

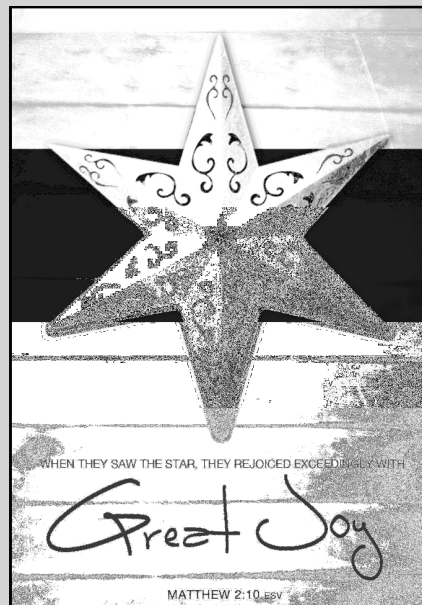
Joan Baker, Christian Education Team Chair

The Candy Cane Story

A candymaker in Indiana wanted to make a candy that would remind people of the true meaning of Christmas; so he made the candy cane to incorporate several symbols for the birth, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ. He began with a stick of pure white, hard candy. White to symbolize the Virgin Birth and the sinless nature of Jesus, and hard to symbolize the Solid Rock, the foundation of the Church, and the firmness of the promises of God.

The candymaker then shaped his cane into the form of a "J" to represent the precious name of Jesus, who came to the earth as Savior. It could also represent the staff of the "Good Shepherd" with which He reaches down to reclaim the fallen lambs who, like sheep, have gone astray.

Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candymaker stained it with red stripes. He used three small stripes to show the stripes of the scourging Jesus received. The large red stripe was for the blood shed by Christ on the cross so that we could have the promise of eternal life.



EDUCATION MINISTRY FOR ALL AGES

8:15 AM CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

3 Yr. Olds-5th Grade (13/14 School Year) Room 3, dismissed to the multi-age Sunday School class after the Children's Message.

9:30 AM CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

3 Yr. Olds-Kindergarten (13/14 School Year) Room 3

1st & 2nd Grades Room 16

3rd-5th Grades Room 8

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 8.

11:00 AM CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

3 Yr. Olds-5th Grade (13/14 School Year) Room 3, dismissed to the multi-age Sunday School class after the Children's Message.

In the coming weeks, let us prepare for the celebration of the Sacrament of Communion on the first Sunday of the month. It is a prayerful time for giving thanks and confessing our sins, renewing our commitment to God, and hearing the Word proclaimed. 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 this process, please contact elder Jackie Koski (jackieandjerry@verizon.net), Chair of the Worship Team, the week prior to communion Sunday.

9:30 AM ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SERENDIPITY—Rooms 13 & 15

Join us as we open the book of John. Class starts at 9:45, but come at 9:30 for coffee, cookies, and a time to chat. Bibles are provided, or bring your own. Discussion led by Doug Shierling.

TCI (Today's Christian Issues)—Rooms 9 & 11

The TCI Class continues to discuss hot topics in today's society. Led by a group of teachers, each class brings to the table current issues with thought provoking questions and great discussion! Join us. Class starts at 9:30.

11:00 AM ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

EXPERIENCING GOD – Rooms 13 & 15

"Christian." Ask 100 people to define what it means, and you'll get 100 different answers. In this series, we will explore the truth and fiction behind one of the most famous brands in all of history. Led by Vicki Krueger.

Safety Harbor Holiday Parade

Come and support Northwood Presbyterian Church in the Safety Harbor Holiday parade; it starts at 1:00pm! Bring a lawn chair or blanket and be on the lookout for Northwood!

Family Christmas Eve Service at 4:30pm

We are looking forward to your musical performance. All participants need to arrive at church by 3:00pm for rehearsal. Please wear sandals (no crocs or flip-flops) & comfortable clothing for under your costume.

Worship Preparation Class For Children

This year the Children's Ministry team will conduct a special Worship Preparation Class for two weeks in February. Children in 2nd grade (or 3rd-5th grades who have not already attended) are invited to this class. Worship Preparation Class is designed to help children feel more at home in the worship service. God created us to be in community with each other and worship is the place we unite together in praise and prayer and hear the word proclaimed. We need to encourage our children that worship is for them as well as adults. We can do this by teaching them the different parts of the worship service and its significance. We want our children to take an active role in our worship, and this class gives them the information and confidence they need to fully participate. The class schedule is as follows:

- Sunday, February 9th & February 16th, from 9:30 – 11:00 am in rooms 4-6
- Sunday, February 23rd, children recognized and presented to the congregation

On Sunday, February 9, from 9:30-10:30 am in room 10, we will hold a parent's class to help you understand what will be covered in the classes and answer any questions you may have.

On the Sunday they are recognized in their worship service, they will receive an Adventure Bible, which is the New International Early Reader's Version (ages 6 through 9). The Adventure Bible is colorful and offers many pictures and explanations to help children understand the Scriptures. If a child already has this Bible, we can either give them an older version of this Bible, the Adventure Bible Devotional Book, or some other age appropriate devotional book.

If you would like your child to attend this class, please RSVP to Justine Ruisz (childrensministry@northwoodpc.org) and choose which Bible or devotional book you prefer your child to receive:

1. Adventure Bible Early Reader Version (ages 6-9)
2. Adventure Bible (ages 9-12)
3. Adventure Bible Devotional Book
4. Another age-appropriate devotional book

Children's Ministry

King's Kids

King's Kids resumes on Wednesday, January 15, from 4:00 – 6:00 pm.

Sunday School Classes

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

Welcome, Justine Ruisz!

The Northwood Family welcomes our new Director of Children's Ministry!

Justine Ruisz grew up at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Clearwater. While there she was actively involved in choir, bells, puppet ministry and Youth Group. She attended College at SPC and realized that there was a career working with children which has always been her passion. She has worked with children for 14 years. She started working in Childcare centers while going to college. She attended UCF and USF to study Early Childhood Education and took the CDA state certification class and received her Director Credentials in Early Childhood Development. She worked in a preschool for 5 years and was the Assistant Director for 2 of those years.

Justine decided she was ready to seek a position with children in a Christian environment. That search led her to her position as Preschool Coordinator at Harborside Christian Church for 3 years, and now to work as the Director of Children's Ministry at Northwood!

She is married to Mathias, aka Matt, her husband of 6 years. They have 2 children Blake and Lukas and live in Clearwater. She is new to Northwood and excited to get to know the families.

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

Youth & Young Adults

Ken Andreassen, Team Chair ~ Gene Weitz, Elder

What's Happening?



Youth Events

There will be no scheduled weekly events through the remainder of the year. Youth Group will resume January 5th. Check in the weekly bulletin, bi-weekly Monitor, and your e-mail for more youth news.

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

Sunday School

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

Confirmation

Calling all 7th graders or older who have not been through confirmation! If you are interested in participating in the 2014 Confirmation Class, please contact Troy Harris. An organizational meeting will be held in January for more information, but in the meantime a list of those interested is being compiled. It is the church's sincere hope that if you have not already been through that you will consider doing so!

All Youth Retreat, February 7-9

Sign up soon to reserve your spot for our annual All Youth Retreat. Secure your spot with a \$50.00 deposit. Spaces are limited, so sign up today. Total cost is \$130.00. Contact Troy with questions.

Annual Report Deadline January 6th 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

Food Pantry Request

Due to increased requests and the holidays, we need (cans & glass jars only, please) tuna, meats, pasta (such as ravioli or spaghetti), chili, beef stew, chicken and dumplings, pasta sauce, fruit, and chunky soups. We also need peanut butter and jelly which may be in plastic containers. Monetary donations are also accepted. If you have questions please call Pat Rabenstine at 727-785-5080. Thank you for your help.

2014 Women's Retreat!!

Ginger Renfro, a gifted Christian speaker, gospel singer and teacher, will lead us on "A Journey Worth Taking" at the Women's Retreat at Cedarkirk on Feb. 7-9. Info can be found on the bulletin board across from the water fountain. Mark your calendars and sign up TODAY!

Recycling

The proceeds from paper recycling via the blue dumpster at the church are still used to fund college scholarships. We welcome your newspapers for this worthwhile project!

Prayer Group

Thursday morning prayer group meets at 10 a.m. in the church parlor. New participants are always welcome. If you have any questions, please contact Jeanette Holloway at 937-3640.

"Sign Up To Greet"

Please check your schedule and sign up to greet your fellow parishioner with a smile and a hand shake; it's painless! Interested in a week or two? Please call Barbara Moler, 734-3331, and she will sign you up. Thank you!

Annual Congregational Meeting & Potluck Lunch January 26th at Noon

Mark your calendars for Sunday, January 26th. 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

It's almost registration time for the pre-school. In-House Registration will begin February 3-7. That means currently enrolled students, siblings of currently enrolled students, and Church members. **Public registration will begin on February 10.** A reminder that Kid's Corner is a N.A.E.Y.C. (National Association for the Education of Young Children), as well as a Gold Seal Provider for the State of Fla. Our 4yr. olds consistently rank in the top 5% in the State of Fla., as well. We are beginning our 5 day 3 yr. old program next year. If you go to Northwood's Website and click on schools, you will see the classes that are offered and their prices. We have been serving the community for close to 30 years with a quality pre-school experience that combines the Love of God with the Love of Children. If you have any questions, please contact me at 727-723-7679 or vickic@northwoodpc.org.

Music Ministry

Stephanie Carson, Director of Music ~ Tom Huffman, Organist & Associate Music Director

Ring, Sing, & Mingle' Thank You!

Our Third Annual "Ring, Sing, & Mingle" event was a JOY—to rehearse, to present, to hear, to participate and to fellowship. We got to sing 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 for many who contributed to the cost as the free-will offering garnered over \$500 to off-set expenses.

Most of all, 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 see Jesus at NPC.

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

Annual Church-Wide Garage Sale

The yearly yard sale benefitting Northwood's Music Ministry will be on TWO days this year: January 10 and 11, and we need your donations! I know people are purging at the end of the year, and we hope to benefit from your items you no longer want or need.

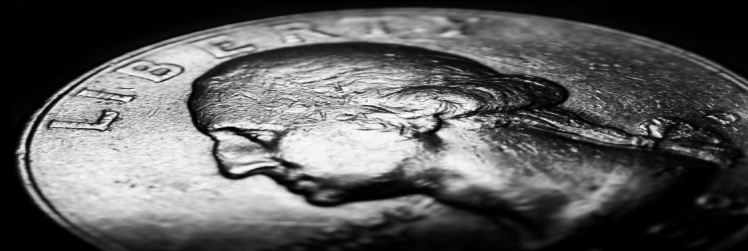
We are in need of items for the following categories: housewares, electronics, furniture, oldies but goodies (collectibles), jewelry, books/DVD's/puzzles, children's items, clothing, linens, hardware, bikes, pictures, holiday, tools, sporting equipment – nearly anything you could think of – EXCEPT: entertainment 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.

Drop-offs begin December 29th in room 14 or the gym. Thank you in advance for your donations and service!!

Stephanie Carson and the Yard Sale Team

Matters Financial



Caring for Our Church Family

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 22nd) and offerings to the Deacon's Fund (Christmas Eve). All gifts received on Christmas Eve are presumed to be for the Deacon's Fund and must be marked otherwise if that is your intent. We are grateful for your generous giving, and any information you clearly provide will help accurately direct your gift.

As a reminder, gifts to be counted as 2013 contributions for tax purposes must be received before the church office closes at noon on December 31st. Checks mailed should have a date of 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 26). 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 2013 also must 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 2014 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 home page at www.northwoodpc.org or call the Church Office. For your convenience, gifts can be processed as credit card or e-check transactions. Additionally, you may make a one-time gift or set your contributions up for automated processing on a schedule that you select. Participation in the offering on Sunday morning is an act of worship, and we wish to include those who choose to give online. If you like, laminated cards located in the Narthex can be placed in the offering plate to say "My gift this week was made online."

Thank you for your continued and faithful support of the ministry and mission of Northwood Presbyterian Church.

Current Budget 2013 Pledge and Contribution Update

	Expected 2013 Amount	Received To Date*	Balance Outstanding
Pledge Contributions	\$520,000.00	\$497,465.00	\$28,535.00
Non-Pledge Contributions	\$110,000.00	\$88,212.00	\$21,788.00
2013 Balance Outstanding			\$50,323.00

*Data as of December 10, 2013. If you believe you are behind on your pledge or giving, please note that all giving intended for 2013 must be received in the Church office before Noon on December 31, 2013, or postmarked by that same date.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Ken Andreassen; Babs Avery; Larry Cornillaud; Doris Croas-mun; Jean Dayes; Dorothy Dykstra; Barb Finn; Hugh Gott; Rees Heycock; Lou Hortobagyi; Barbara Hunt; Kelly Jordan; Jane Kaempfer; Bea Kimball; Diane Luke; Mildred Martin; Robin MacLennan; Bert McCormick; Annie McElveen; Curtis McLeod; Helen Meier; Melissa Mortin (Daughter of Pamela Pe-ters); Pamela Peters; Nancy Phillips; Norman Phillips; Marian & Walter Rather; Barbara Smith; David Smith; Charline Snow; Gene Snyder; Lucille Talbot; Alice Wilson.

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:

- Pauline Jensen and family on the news of the death of her husband, Elmer Jensen, on Friday, December 6th. There will be no service held locally.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

In Memory of:
William Kopp

Dixie Walker

In Honor of:
Carmele Andrews

Given by:
Doug & Tammy Shierling

Jean DeFilippo
Art & Jeanette Holloway

Given by:
Diane & Dan Musto

Congratulations to the Nigel Family

who welcomed baby Ansleigh Michele Nigels to the family. Ansleigh was born October 10, 2013 weighing 5lbs 15 oz. Parents, Mike & Michele and proud brothers, Matthew, Riley and CJ, are so excited for their new addition to the family! Her brothers have already nicknamed her "Princess!" Congratulations again!

VITALS

Weather: Warm & Sunny

December 8, 2013

(8:15) 137

(9:30) 149

(11:00) 183

Ring Sing Mingle 300

Total: 769

Thanks From the Mission Field

Calvary Chapel Worship Center

Dear Northwood, I just wanted to personally thank you for the donation of the staging platform to our evangelistic outreach ministries. We have found many uses for it, including our street drama team which has been praying for this for many months.
In His Service,
Pastor Jill A. Buyea

Shriners Hospital

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 11/15/13. 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,
David Ferrell
Administrator

Beth-El

Dear Northwood, Thank you for your donation of \$800 and the hundreds of blankets you donated. We are blessed to have supporters like you to assist those that are in such need.
Blessings,
Dave Moore
Executive Director

Habitat for Humanity

Dear Northwood: Thank you for your donation of \$1,420 on 11/22/2013. We are grateful for your kindness and support of our mission.
Let's build,
Ronald E. Spoor
Interim President & CEO

HEP

Dear Northwood, On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors at Homeless Emergency Project, Inc., I gratefully acknowledge the gift of the peace-making offering of \$386, and the \$250 as part of your benevolence offering.
Sincerely,
Barbara Green, President

Presbyterian World Mission

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