

Family Information

Holiday Schedules

Sunday Afternoon Worship - The class resumes meeting today at 4:00 PM.

Tuesday Women's Bible Study - The Bible study resumes meeting this Tuesday, January 10.

(The other classes and sessions have also resumed at their usual times.)

Clothing Closet Discussion Meeting

There will be a meeting in the fellowship room (E41-42) following the morning worship assembly on Sunday, January 29th, for anyone who is interested in helping with the clothing closet, or who has any ideas or questions about it.

Faith-Based Book Club Beginning In February

Caleb is putting together a faith-based book club that is open to the church and the community. The first book up for discussion is "Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense" by N.T. Wright. The book club will meet in the fellowship room (E41-42) on Saturday, February 11, from 1:30-3:00 PM.

Offering Envelopes For 2023 Now Available

Offering envelopes for 2023 are still available in the church office for those who have requested them. If you don't have envelopes and would like a set, see Ashley Dillinger or Glenn Culler.

Transition To New Web Site

The transition to Northland's new web site (ncocfamily.com) from the old site (ncocfamily.org) is currently in progress, as the details are being worked out. See Jack Evans if you have any questions.

Service Times

Sunday Morning Bible Study 9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship 10:00 AM
Sunday Spanish Worship 10:00 AM
Sunday Ghana Worship 12:00 PM
Sunday Evening Worship 4:00 PM

For sessions that are currently meeting on-line, see the announcements above.

Minister: Caleb Dillinger
Elders: Mike Evans, Jeff McVicker, Jim Robbins
Deacons: Lynn Champney, Perry Coate, Glenn Culler, Darrell Estep, Jack Evans, John Lindsay, Don Milnor, Art Silva
Spanish Ministry: Luis Valdez

On Line Bible Studies

Current On-Line Studies

Every other Friday at 7:00 PM - TGIF Bible Study led by Mike Evans. Contact him for details and the current schedule.

Mondays at 7:00 PM - Women's prayer group, hosted by Peggy Kaiser. Contact her for details. If you aren't able to join, you can e-mail prayer requests to Peggy.

Tuesdays at 7:00 PM - Women's Bible study "Abide In Christ", led by Karen Susenna. The current study is in Acts. Contact Karen for more details.

Children's Classes

We currently have children's classes for ages 2-10 during worship (each of them begins after the Lord's Supper). See Mike Evans for further details. The children's education program needs helpers for all age groups. See Lynn Paden or Emily Graham if you can help.

Contribution

| | Last Week | Average YTD |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| General: | \$5540 | \$5540 |
| Designated: | \$ | \$ |



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Morning By Morning

The Lord within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail. - Zephaniah 3:5

Each day we face this world's confusion and fears and harshness, yet morning by morning the Lord dwells within those who walk by faith in Jesus; he gives us what our souls need, and day by day he sustains us and renews us inwardly. Jesus is our Shepherd, and he gathers his scattered flock - *I will purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord . . . my worshipers, my scattered people, will bring me offerings. - Zephaniah 3:9-10*

French novelist Muriel Barbery (1969-present) writes about the human search for meaning in her novel "The Elegance Of The Hedgehog". The main characters are Renée, the concierge of an apartment building, and Paloma, the daughter of one of the tenants. Both are discouraged by the world's superficiality and the unwillingness of those around them to look for lasting meaning. Renée lives in loneliness, and Paloma in desperation.

As Paloma says, "life goes by in no time at all, yet they're always in such a hurry . . . so eager for now that they don't think about tomorrow." When she meets Renée, they help one another with their thoughts and sorrows and fears. Similarly, Jesus gathers us so we may reassure one another of God's compassion; and when we seek God with a meek and humble heart, we will find him—*I will leave within you the meek and humble. The remnant of Israel will trust in the name of the Lord. - Zephaniah 3:12*

The two characters see themselves as "hedgehogs" for the ways they shield themselves from this world's emptiness. Renée says, "In a split second of eternity, everything is changed, transfigured. A few bars of music . . . a touch of perfection in the flow of human dealings . . . the camellia . . ." Similarly, when we open our hearts to God, he shows us reminders of his care and splendor in unexpected places, and he reassures us with his boundless truths - *The Lord your God is with you . . . He will take great delight in you . . . will rejoice over you with singing. - Zephaniah 3:17*

Later, the main characters befriend a retiree from Japan, who joins their discussions. As they realize, "There's a lot of despair, but also the odd moments of beauty, where time is no longer the same . . . an always within a never." God is always near us, and as these characters simply found companionship and comfort, our Heavenly Father gives us a much deeper level of meaning and hope and fellowship through Jesus - *I will rescue the lame; I will gather the exiles . . . I will bring you home. - Zephaniah 3:19-20*

And God has prepared for us an eternal home, where we may see his fullness forever.

- Mark Garner

The Scriptures

In the procession behind the lifted cross,
the Scripture, too, is held aloft.
It shapes us. We hear it, sing it,
plunge into God's saving action through it.

It molds space, creates the paraments,
the carvings, the windows filled with story.
Flames and lilies at the altar, these too
from Scripture. Each image a tale, the gospel
a story linking each person in these pews
with every other one who has held
out her hand for bread, his body.

The book is Word, and Christ the Word made flesh.
The language both complex and simple,
formed between tongue and lips,
pronounced, tasted, incarnate.

- Jill Peláez Baumgaertner, 1948-present

Morning Light

Home of the weary, we wanderers would hail thee,
Catching the gleam of thy shining dome afar;
City of Peace, no tempest can assail thee.
Light never waning, no shadow can mar.

Look, pilgrim, look, the morning light is breaking
Shout for the perils of the gloomy night are past
Joy, for the shining ones to welcome thee are waiting,
Enter thy Father's house - at rest, at home, at last.

- Mary Elsie Thalheimer, 1865

Historian and writer Mary Thalheimer wrote numerous history textbooks in the 1800s and early 1900s, many on ancient and medieval history, as well as publishing several manuals for history teachers.

A New Heart & A New Spirit

In Ezekiel 36, God tells us that he will give us a new heart and a new spirit when we realize our need for him and turn to him humbly. This week, Steve Carver writes about how this promise can help us through difficult times.

Ezekiel's Message Of Hope In The Midst Of Trouble

Our God is a loving parent. He has and continues to bless his people with many rich blessings! One might rightfully expect such favor to generate remembrance, gratitude, love, trust, and reliance on our part. So why is it that with human nature such favor too often breeds complacency, entitlement, willfulness, and pride; which too often foments rebellion against God? And why is it that every generation of his people (collectively and individually) has to learn and relearn the hard lessons of this destructive path?

Ezekiel lived and prophesied during a period of time when the consequences of Israel's willfulness and rebellion had come due. God was not being capricious in his discipline. He had reached out time, and time again, through his faithful prophets and priests, to call his people back to him. But they would not listen:

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

But God is loving and gracious. He did not leave his people to stew in their misery and exile without hope. Nor does he, by extension, leave us to do so in our brokenness. God's encouraging message through Ezekiel was:

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

God did for Israel, what he did for his servant, David:

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation . . . My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart. (Psalm 51:10-12, 17)

Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge . . . Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. I cling to you . . . Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. (Psalm 57:1; Psalm 63:7-8; Psalm 57:11)

And what he does for us as we humble ourselves, and seek his face:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future . . . nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35a, 38-39)

- Steve Carver