

NEWS FROM NORTHAMPTON

Northampton Presbyterian Church
539 Buck Road, Holland, PA

DECEMBER 2020



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“Thoughts on Christmas, 2020”

By The Rev. Dr. Andrew H. Mann Jr.

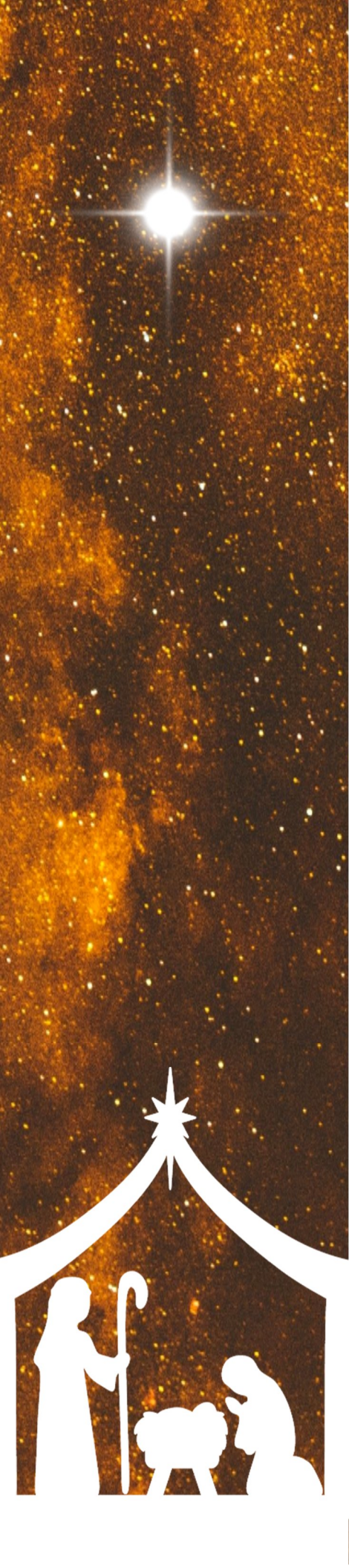
“...An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Impossible dreams. This whole season is about impossible dreams.

When Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant, he knew it was not his baby. He was a good man, so he was hardly prepared for that. Mary had seemed so lovely, and so innocent. And now this. What was he to do? What was he to think? All of his dreams lay in ruins.

Being a merciful man, he did what his friends likely called him a fool for doing and that was to quietly and mercifully put her away and to end the relationship. It was his full right to have her put to death; adultery by a woman was a crime punishable by death by public stoning. Brokenhearted, Joseph just decided to end the engagement. Quietly.

After deciding how to handle this awful news, he laid his head down to a sleep that came only fitfully. It was then that he had this dream.



Something about the Holy Spirit and that the child was actually to be the Son of God. Mary had not committed adultery as he and everyone had assumed, but instead she had been overshadowed by the Spirit of God. Almost as hard to believe, Joseph was told that this child, this extraordinary child, would change the world. It was an impossible dream. Ridiculous. No one could believe such a thing, that the world could be changed by a little child.

But Joseph believed the impossible dream revealed the truth. He believed that what seemed impossible was, in fact, going to come to pass. It turns out that he was right. The impossible dream was not impossible at all; the Child changed everything. It was not impossible after all.

Well, the story is ours now. We have heard it once more. It is no longer Joseph's impossible dream. It is our impossible dream. The ball is in our court now. When we wake from the dream of bright lights, soft candle glow, familiar traditions, the Old Story, and lovely carols, what will our response be? Do we believe the dream - that this world and our lives - can be different? Because of this Child? Or do we quietly resolve to put it away as a wistfully beautiful but empty tale?

A Child is born. Everything changes because of it. Truth? Or impossible dream? Believe it? Or not?

It is our dream now. Do with it what we will.

- Drew

Advent Preaching Texts

First Sunday of Advent:

November 29th – Luke 1:26-38

Second Sunday of Advent:

December 6th – Luke 1:39-45

Third Sunday of Advent:

December 13th – Luke 1:46-56

Fourth Sunday of Advent:

December 20th – Luke 2:1-20

Longest Night Service:

**December 20th – I Thessalonians 4:13-14
and Matthew 2:1-12**



In-person Worship Suspended

By the Rev. Dr. Andrew H. Mann Jr.

At their November meeting, Session prayerfully and carefully considered the abrupt and dramatic escalation in the spread of the COVID virus in our immediate area as well as across the commonwealth and nation.

While Session wished to continue with in-person services, in the interest of the safety of our specific congregational membership, Session has decided to suspend our foray into in-person worship, beginning this Sunday the 22nd, for three Sundays, November 22, 29, and December 6. For those three Sundays, we will revert to our previous pattern of live streaming our service from our sanctuary. There will be no in-person worship on those Sundays.

On Tuesday, December 8th, Session will meet again to evaluate the data on the intervening direction of the infection. This three-week block of time will give us the opportunity for a more studied understanding of the direction that viral surge wants to take. We will be hoping to see a leveling off of what is presently happening. Then we will make a further judgement on the safety of holding worship in person and face to face given how the virus is behaving.

We will let you know immediately after that December 8th meeting what direction we believe is safe for us to follow.

In the meantime, may all of you have a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving.

God bless.

Drew

Communion Sundays

By The Rev. Dr. Andrew H. Mann Jr.

The good news is that beginning in the month of December we will return to our old habit of sharing communion on the first Sunday of every month. We are excited about returning to this central act of our worship life, and hope to have everyone present during the livestream.

Communion will begin on Sunday, December 6th at the 10:00 AM service.

Since you will be worshipping with us virtually at home, you need only secure your own grape juice and glasses for all in your home (or wine or any beverage, really, in a pinch) and bread (or crackers or wafers of some type) for all. These will be your home communion elements of which you will partake during the worship liturgy that morning.



P.N.C. Update

By Dana Winslow

NPC Congregation,

Your PNC is entering an exciting phase of the search process as we are now receiving Pastor Information Forms (PIF's) which are essentially resume's from potential Pastor candidates. These candidates come to us from several sources: first, the Presbytery COM employs a matching process where the qualifications of each candidate are matched via computer algorithm with our job requirements in a kind of "speed dating" process. We have received 25 matched candidates from the first round of this matching. Second, candidates can look over our job description and can submit their PIF on their own, independent of the matching—we have received 3 additional candidates this way. Finally, the PNC has been reaching out to administrators at surrounding Presbyteries that might be aware of candidates that they recommend we contact because of a potential good fit. We have backgrounds from 2 candidates this way. We are also beginning to reach out to local Seminaries to see if their placement services have candidates for us to consider and we are placing descriptions of our position on the web pages of these presbyteries in case candidates are looking through these for opportunities. We will be screening all of the backgrounds to find those we want to contact for further information or interview. We will be busy through the next months with that phase of our process. We continue to seek God's guidance and blessing through each step.

Gratefully Submitted,

Dana Winslow, Chairman on behalf of the PNC

White Gift 2020

By: Cathy Cocchia

Your Mission Committee has designated ***The Food Center at Morrisville Presbyterian Church as our White Gift recipient.***

The mission of the Food Center is to provide supplemental food assistance to families in the Lower Bucks and Trenton areas in a caring and respectful manner. Based on family size, clients receive a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, eggs, dairy products, bakery items, personal care items and household items, as well as diapers and pet food.

In addition to your white gift, please continue to provide food donations for the food center, collected by Steve and Cathy Cocchia at 132 Wooden Bridge Rd., Holland, PA (215-322-5843).

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me," Matthew 25:35.



Minute for Mission: International Children's Aid Foundation

By: Kathie Pisciella

Some of our NPC Mission envelope/online offerings have been designated to support International Children's Aid Foundation (ICAF). ICAF is a non-denominational humanitarian organization founded by Christians committed to providing for the health, education, and development of abandoned and orphaned children through the operation of a Christian inspired family-group home known as Casa Emanuel Home in Crișcior, Romania. The below is from their website www.casaemanuelhome.org

When the ICAF was incorporated in 1997, the desire was to share the love of Christ with some of Romania's most vulnerable people, orphans. This continues to be the vision of ICAF as it remains committed to investing in the lives of children in the Hunedoara region of Romania through Casa Emanuel Home. Casa Emanuel Home is a large private residence located in the town of Crișcior where the staff provide a place for children to call home. Currently we have the ability to care for up to twenty-five children at a time. Children range in ages from three to high school graduation, which typically is at age nineteen. The caregivers intentionally foster a family environment, encouraging the children to help with chores, care for one another, and excel in school.

The website for ICAF, as well as the other missions supported by NPC, can also be found on our NPC website – www.northamptonpresby.com. Click "Get Involved" on the top bar. A dropdown menu will appear – choose "Missions We Support" and then click on "International Missions" and scroll down to International Children's Aid Foundation. Click on "Learn More" to be taken to ICAF's website. Scroll down through the website to read and see photos from ICAF.

Financial Update

By Pam Kemper

Just a short note to thank everyone for their generous response to the financial strain of last month. Giving was at or even above pre-pandemic levels last month. So, even with the increase in expenses that always comes later in the year, the month finished in the black! Although we are still behind overall, we are entering the holiday season on a positive note.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Pam

Monthly Financial Report

	Oct 2020	Year to Date	% of Budget
GENERAL FUND INCOME	25,556.61	207,731.48	79%
GENERAL FUND EXPENSES			
PAYROLL	10,930.25	110,382.40	85%
BENEFITS	1,064.42	11,048.41	68%
ADMINISTRATIVE	2,635.63	19,111.40	59%
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION		339.19	22%
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE		106.17	13%
FACILITIES			
PNC Mortgage	4,705.03	47,050.30	83%
Church Facilities	3,426.89	34,838.06	69%
PASTOR SEARCH		208.89	21%
PRESCHOOL COST ALLCTN	-1000.00	-8,750.00	32%
STEWARDSHIP		455.03	105%
WORSHIP	28.96	964.84	20%
Total GENERAL FUND EXPENSES	21,897.18	215,754.69	81%
NET	1,659.43	(8,023.21)	

Christmas Park-Luck Event

By: Lea Pennington

The first NPC annual "Park Luck Christmas 2020" will be held on the front patio outside of the narthex on:

**Saturday, December 5th
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM**

Activities:

- Decorating the trees and bushes with twinkle lights
- Enjoying BYOSB (bring your own snacks and beverages)
- Listening to NPC's very own Christmas Carolers

We will have real fire pits for warmth, and the education wing restrooms will be available for use. Please bring your own lawn chairs and dress warmly. We will be practicing social distancing and wearing masks. Come for the evening, or just drop in to say "Hi".

So mark your calendars for this first annual "Park Luck Christmas" event. If you have any questions, just text or call Lea Pennington at 215-901-6188.

*Rain date - Sunday December 6th,
same time and place.*





Advent

SERVICES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

- (SUN) NOV. 29TH 10:00 AM AT-HOME WORSHIP (1ST SUNDAY IN ADVENT)
- (SAT) DEC. 5TH 4:30 PM “PARK LUCK” OUTDOOR DECORATING WITH CAROLING**
- (SUN) DEC. 6TH 10:00 AM AT-HOME WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION
(2ND SUNDAY IN ADVENT) *EACH HOME NEEDS TO SECURE THEIR OWN ELEMENTS FOR THEIR AT-HOME COMMUNION*
- (SUN) DEC. 13TH 10:00 AM AT-HOME WORSHIP (3RD SUNDAY IN ADVENT)
- (SUN) DEC. 13TH 7:30 PM CAROL SING EVENING OVER ZOOM**
- (SUN) DEC. 20TH 10:00 AM AT-HOME WORSHIP (4TH SUNDAY IN ADVENT)
- (SUN) DEC. 20TH 7:30 PM SERVICE OF THE LONGEST NIGHT**
- (THU) DEC. 24TH 7:30 PM OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT & CAROLS SERVICE**
- (SUN) DEC. 27TH 10:00 AM AT-HOME WORSHIP
- (SUN) JAN. 3RD 10:00 AM NEW YEAR’S AT-HOME WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION
EACH HOME NEEDS TO SECURE THEIR OWN ELEMENTS FOR THEIR AT-HOME COMMUNION
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December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 ADVENT BEGINS 10:00 AM Sunday Worship Livestream	30	1	2 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study ZOOM	3 10:00 AM Adult Bible Study ZOOM 5:00 PM Girl Scouts (Outside) 7:00 PM PNC Mtg	4	5 4:30 PM Christmas Park Luck Event
6 10:00 AM Communion Service Livestream 7:00 PM Deacons	7 7:00 PM Mission Committee	8 7:00 PM Session Meeting	9 7:30 PM Fireside Chat Livestream	10 7:00 PM PNC Mtg	11	12
13 10:00 AM Sunday Worship Livestream 7:30 PM Carol Sing Evening ZOOM	14 7:00 PM Facilities Committee	15	16 4:00 PM Women's Digging Deeper Study ZOOM 7:30 PM Fireside Chat Livestream	17 10:00 AM Adult Bible Study ZOOM 5:00 PM Girl Scouts (Outside) 7:00 PM PNC Mtg	18	19
20 10:00 AM Sunday Worship Livestream 7:30 PM Service of the Longest Night Livestream	21	22 7:00 PM Theology on Tap ZOOM	23 7:30 PM Fireside Chat Livestream	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 7:30 PM Outdoor Christmas Eve Candlelight and Carols Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26
27 10:00 AM Sunday Worship Livestream	28 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	29	30 7:30 PM Fireside Chat Livestream	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE		

Livestream Information:

All "livestreamed" messages are broadcasted from our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/northamptonpresby

Livestream service bulletins are posted on our website: www.northamptonpresby.com/bulletins

~Sunday Worship Services are additionally posted on our website: www.northamptonpresby.com/sermon-videos

~Fireside Chats are additionally posted on our website: www.northamptonpresby.com/fireside-chat-videos

Zoom Meetings: (contact npchurch@comcast.net for ZOOM invitations)

~Theology on Tap meets on 2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 7:00 PM on ZOOM.

~Women's Bible Study meets 1st Wednesdays at 7:00 PM on ZOOM.

~Thursday Bible Study meets on 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursdays at 10:00 AM on ZOOM.

Northampton Presbyterian Church

539 Buck Road, Holland, PA 18966 215-357-8282 Fax 215-364-5867
CHURCH OFFICE: npchurch@comcast.net PASTOR: npmann@comcast.net
www.northamptonpresby.org