

North Star

A publication from North Presbyterian Church, Williamsville, NY March, April, and May 2017
716-632-1330 n.church@verizon.net

LENT: “OVERCOMING OUR IMPULSE TO FEAR”

The season of Lent is a time for reflection as well as penance. When we look within and discover our shortcomings, we are wise to examine ourselves more closely to discern the roots of our condition. That’s what a group of adults have been doing on Sunday mornings for the last two months. They’ve been using the book *Waking Up White (and finding myself in the story of race)* by Debby Irving as a guide to help them uncoil the snare of white privilege in our society and discover how it can be addressed and corrected.

As I mentioned in my article at the beginning of Advent in December, Irving’s book is eye-opening for anyone who has benefited from the power structures that exist in our society and lived the

fantasy that race has nothing to do with it. In recent months we’ve seen an increase in race-related threats and violence in our country: mosques have been set on fire, people of color who are foreigners (and believed to be Muslim) have been targeted, immigrants and refugees have been vilified. But the greatest increase in these incidents has occurred against Jews.

“We must find ways of creating community with our Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, or Buddhist neighbors and discover who they are, and learn to appreciate and value our differences.”—Pastor Bill

Beginning in January, Jewish Community Centers across the country have received bomb threats causing them to evacuate their buildings. These

threats often occur in multiple locations on the same day, giving the impression that they are coordinated and not isolated incidents. In February two Jewish cemeteries, one in St. Louis, MO, the other in Philadelphia, were vandalized with headstones toppled and broken. No one was

injured in these incidents, no bombs were found in the buildings, but the intimidation and attempt to instill fear they represent is a product of the continuing presence of anti-Semitism in our culture, a hateful worldview that has persisted in the West for centuries.

Anti-Semitism is Christianity's original sin. Even though our roots are in Judaism—Jesus was a devout first-century Jew—our divorce from it led to a rivalry that can be detected in our gospels. The anti-Jewish rhetoric of the gospels comes from a small, beleaguered community struggling to survive. But as Christianity spread across the Roman Empire and eventually was adopted (some might say co-opted) by the Empire in the first half of the 4th century, that argumentative rhetoric became lethal. Jews became the enemy for the Church; a people who had “rejected their Messiah,” and so were regarded with contempt.

The season of Lent, especially Holy Week, has historically been a time of terror for Jews, when the Church focuses on the Passion narratives in our gospels and has used them as an excuse to attack Jewish communities. As a faith we have much to repent of, but nothing has been more destructive in our history than the sin of anti-Semitism and our deplorable treatment of our Jewish brothers and sisters. I suspect that sin lies at the root of every other act of intolerance and bigotry the Church has indulged. Once we deem one group of people beyond the pale of compassion and acceptance, it's much easier to do the same to others.

So what can be done to change this? Healing in the gospels always begins with relationship. We must find ways of creating community with our Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, or Buddhist neighbors and discover who they are, and learn to appreciate and

value our differences. We must confess that our hatred and bigotry comes from within us and stop blaming it on God. Scripture does not call us to hate. Any interpretation of scripture that leads to hatred of another group in our society is a false interpretation and must be rejected. Finally, we must continue to examine ourselves, to persevere in our inward journey and open ourselves more fully to God's presence in our lives. Only through that presence can we overcome our impulse to fear with love. As we learn in 1 John: “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”

May God's peace walk with you through this season and always,

Pastor Bill

Change in *North Star* Schedule

In an effort to better meet the needs of our church, we have developed a new publishing schedule for the newsletter. *North Star* will be published four times a year—March, June, September, and December. We believe that other methods of communication that we use—Thursday e-mail, Facebook, bulletin, and website—are quite effective in communicating messages. Because we employ several vehicles through which we communicate, we believe there is no need for the newsletter to be produced monthly. We hope you will read Page 9 and refresh yourself on how to get in touch with the church.

***North Star* Deadlines**

Feb. 15

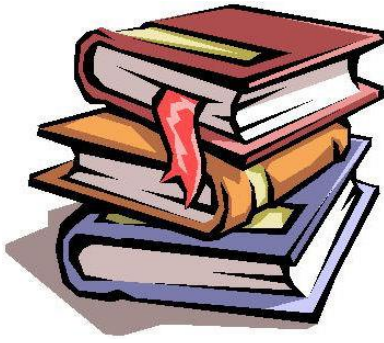
May 15 (next one)

August 15

November 15

Book Groups

Everyone is welcome to come to a book group discussion. They meet the third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. and the fourth Wednesday of the each month at 1:00 p.m. These groups meet in the library.



March 15, 10:00 a.m.

Balcony on the Moon: Coming of Age in Palestine by Ibtisam Baraka

March 27, 1:00 p.m.

Hidden Figures by Margot Lee Shetterly

April 26, 1:00 p.m.

Poetry: bring your favorite poetry and share with the group

(Tuesday) Lenten Soup Suppers and Study—"Israel: Past, Present, and Future"

March 7, 14, 21, 28, and April 4

5:45-7:30 p.m., Westminster Hall

Enjoy homemade soup, bread, fresh fruit and dessert. Cost is only \$5 per adult; children eat free. Our study this year, led by Rev. Hennessy, is titled "Israel: Past, Present, and Future."

We will have child care in the nursery but please let the church know if you would like to take advantage of this opportunity. Please sign up your children the day before each scheduled soup supper by calling or emailing the church: 716.632.1330 or n.church@verizon.net.

Holy Week Services

Potluck Seder Supper

Thursday, April 13, 5:45 p.m., Westminster Hall

The Passover Seder meal celebrates the deliverance of the Hebrew people from Egyptian slavery and God's great love for God's chosen people. Before Jesus was betrayed, he shared a Passover meal with his disciples, which has come to be known as Communion for Christians.

Maundy Thursday (April 13)

Communion/Tenebrae Service, 7:30 pm

Good Friday (April 14), noon

Prayer, reflections and music in the sanctuary with mixed choir from Amherst, Clarence and North Presbyterian churches.

Easter Worship Services, April 16

8:00am Sunrise Worship

10:45 Worship Service, Sanctuary

Easter Flowers & Music

Easter lilies, daffodils and hyacinths will adorn the sanctuary, and a brass quintet will play for our

Easter worship service. Those desiring to make a

contribution toward the flowers and music in

honor, memory, or celebration of loved

ones, see Linda Gowans, Olivia Ebsary, or

Jeff Faunce following worship services on

March 29, April 2, or April 9. Cost is \$10

per plant. You may also call the church office

at 716-632-1330, or print out the form at

[https://northpresbyterianchurch.files.wordpress.com/20](https://northpresbyterianchurch.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/order-form-easter-flowers-and-brass.pdf)

[12/02/order-form-easter-flowers-and-brass.pdf](https://northpresbyterianchurch.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/order-form-easter-flowers-and-brass.pdf) and

mail it in by **April 9**.





Upcoming Musical Opportunities

Palm Sunday: If you would like to sing with us during the opening *Hosanna*, please contact Marlene Harrington at

mwharrington.35@verizon.net or call 839-1930 for more information. The only rehearsal will be prior to the service on **April 9**.

Easter (April 16): Additional singers are welcome to join the choir for this festive occasion. Some rehearsal is necessary. Contact Marlene for details.

Tour Platter's Chocolate Factory

The Men's Fellowship is sponsoring this tour of the Platter's Chocolate Factory on Saturday, March 11, at 9:30 a.m. Everyone is invited for this tour, which lasts about a half hour. Bring your Easter holiday shopping list; the store will be open! We will be meeting for breakfast at 8 a.m. at Olympia Restaurant, 3312 Niagara Falls Blvd., North Tonawanda. You do not have to go to breakfast to go to on the chocolate factory tour. Please r.s.v.p. to Bob Henderson at tefnorma@gmail.com.

Homemade Pizza Day

Sunday, March 12 @ 12 (After Worship)
456 Group will be serving homemade pizza and salad. Come and enjoy!

The Same Scriptures, Different Eyes: An Interfaith Program

Rev. Hennessy and Rabbi Lazarus-Klein of Congregation Shir Shalom (CSS) invite you to listen in as they introduce texts that are shared between Christians and Jews and talk about the similarities and differences in how these texts are viewed in their respective communities. **All are welcome to these free Wednesday talks from 10-11:30 a.m.**

The remaining schedule is as follows: **March 8** at North (library): Leviticus 19 and the Beatitudes, the important principles for living a good life; and **March 15** at CSS: The later chapters of Isaiah, and Jews and Christian views of the afterlife.

InerG Dinner and Rehearsal

"InerG" is the new name for the intergenerational choir that provides special music once a month during the 10:45 a.m. service, led by music assistant Kurt Ebsary. We are musicians (vocal and instrumental of all skill levels) ranging in age from 8th grade through adult who want to experience the joy of creation and praise through music. Everyone is welcome.



Designed by Katherine L. Bath 2011

We meet again on Sunday, March 12, from 5 -7 p.m. for dinner and a

jam session! Kurt will have some instruments and lead us in song. You are invited to bring an instrument as well and come to sing or just for dinner (free, accepting goodwill donation) and listen to the music! Sign up at church or e-mail

kebsary@gmail.com. (This dinner and jam session is the rehearsal for singing in the 10:45 a.m. worship service on Sunday, March 19, at 10:45 a.m.)

Scholarship Funds Provide for Programs and Activities

North Presbyterian Church is fortunate to have three scholarship funds that promote programs and activities.

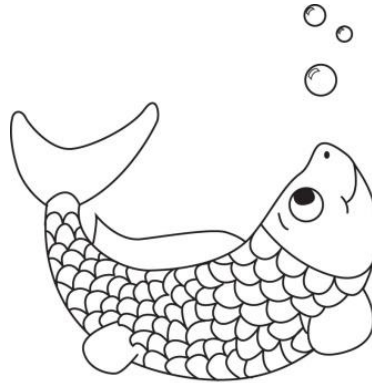
Established through memorial gifts made in honor of Mary Mohlke, the **Mary Mohlke Fund for Spiritual Formation** promotes spiritual formation and lifelong learning. The fund provides financial support for individuals to attend classes, conferences, etc. on subjects such as spirituality, Christian education, understanding various faiths and church leadership. Applicants can be North Church members or others associated with North in some way.

A grant from the **New Initiatives Fund** underwrote Service Sunday in 2015, at which more than 100 children, youth and adults worked at 10 sites. The New Initiatives Fund was established in 2015 at North Church through a member's anonymous gift. The Fund's purpose is to provide grant funding for new initiatives for which a source of funding does not exist.

Established in 1983, the **Sally Munson Scholarship Fund** encourages participation in the wider church. It provides financial assistance to attend denominational meetings, conventions and workshops. The fund honors Sally Munson, who was a leader in the Presbyterian Women of North

Church, moderator of the Presbytery of Western New York and a devoted elder.

To apply for a scholarship, visit <https://northchurchwilliamsville.org/who-we-are/scholarship-funds/> and fill out an application.



Fish Banks Are Here!

The children will receive their fish banks on **Sunday, March 5.**

Congregation, please bring your loose change and help the children fill their banks.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing you are assisting in the empowerment of others as they move past emotional, physical, and spiritual misfortune. Your help gives hope. Thank you!

Save the Dates

April

- 2: Last "Yoga in the Chapel"
- 4: Lenten Soup Supper
- 13: Maundy Thursday
- 14: Good Friday
- 16: Easter
- 17: Church office closed
- 18: Group 456 to Corning
- 29: Men's Breakfast



May

- 3: Chiavatta's BBQ Chicken Dinner/Fundraiser
- 13: Men's Fellowship
- 29: Memorial Day (office closed)

**Check out the March calendar at
<https://northpresbyterianchurch.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/march-2017.pdf>**

Do You Need Help or Support?

The Deacons of North Church serve the congregation through hospitality, compassion, caring for the lonely, comforting the sick, prayer, and caring for others. Are you experiencing a life event where you could use support or help? We would like to know your concerns and help find ways to get you the support you need. We are looking for ways to expand our outreach and understand how we can assist. Please feel free to reach out to any of the Deacons or send an email to npcdeaconscares@gmail.com.



Memorial Garden

The triangle of land located between the north and south wings of North Church is a particularly appropriate place for our memorial garden, which has 592 spaces for interment of cremated remains.

Our churchyard is not a public facility, but is a burial ground for present and past North Church



families. The south wall section was given in memory of Muriel Snider; the north section was given in memory of Sally Munson.

If you would like to know more about the Memorial Garden, please see the brochure on our website at

<http://northchurchwilliamsville.org/about-us/who-we-are/memorial-garden/> or call the church office and we will be happy to send you a brochure. (716) 632-1330.

Save the Date:

Peacemaking Speaker at North

Wayside Church and the Presbytery of Western New York are thrilled to host Rev. Carl Horton, coordinator of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, on Saturday, March 18, and Sunday, March 19. Rev. Horton will make a morning and afternoon presentation at North Church on Saturday, March 18. He will be preaching at Wayside on Sunday, and he will be the featured speaker at the Presbyterian Youth Connection (PYC)-sponsored Hunger Banquet at Wayside later that day from 5:00 till 7:00—all ages are invited.

(See next page.) Rev. Horton facilitates opportunities to engage, equip and strengthen the church and its people for all levels of peacemaking in a moving, lively and meaningful way.

PYC Hunger Banquet

Sunday, March 19

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Wayside Presbyterian Church

5017 Lakeshore Road

Hamburg, NY 14075

Presbyterian Youth Connection

(PYC)youth, advisors, families, and any other interested folks are cordially invited to enjoy—or not, depending on your “world” classification—a meal, activities, and guest speaker Rev. Carl Horton, director of the Peacemaking Program of the Presbyterian Church, USA. Be prepared to leave with a full tummy *or* the same empty feeling which 85% of the world’s population goes to bed with each night.

Admission = \$1.25 per person, which is the amount that 1.4 billion people in developing countries live on per day. Admission proceeds will benefit Buffalo Peace House on the Lakeshore, which houses asylum seekers from around the globe.

RSVP by March 17 to

lindab@oppchurch.org

(Linda Babcock ~ 863-2801)

Sunday Adult Education Bible Study—9:30 a.m., Resource Center

We are studying *The Parables of Jesus*. The study leaders are volunteers. We are reading and discussing the parables of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. Books and study guides are not required. Come join us.



Stretch through Lent!

Stretch your way through Lent! “Yoga in the Chapel” with Olivia Ebsary has been extended through Sunday, April 2. The eclectic group meets from 9:30-10:15 a.m. If you have a mat you are encouraged to bring it. This is offered free of charge for anyone, any age, and each class will last about 45 minutes. Everyone is invited, no matter your skill level.

Save the Date: Chiavetta’s Chicken BBQ Fundraiser

Join us Wednesday, May 3, from 4-7 p.m. for a delicious meal! Stay tuned to learn about ways you can help with this event.



Sympathy and Prayers

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of **Norma Folmsbee**, who passed away on February 4. (She is the mother of choir member Mark Folmsbee.)

Your Generosity Matters

Thank you for your generous gifts to North Church throughout 2016. All gifts—small and large—are appreciated, for it is together that we fund the mission and ministries of our church. It is through our giving that we glorify God. We respond with what God has provided



us. And, our gifts help North Church carry out the four areas of its mission statement:

- Worship,
- Teaching and learning,
- Outreach and mission, and
- Nurturing and caring for one another.

Thank you for making a financial commitment to North Church for 2017. Remember that, despite the ups and downs in our lives, God's love is steadfast. Glory be to God!

*We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks to you!
We proclaim how great you are and tell of the wonderful
things you have done.
Psalms 75:1*

Secure and Easy Giving

If you want to give to or through North Presbyterian Church, we make it easy for you through our secure, online giving form. Simply click on the "Donate" button at <http://northchurchwilliamsville.org/> and follow the instructions. You may use your credit card or make a bank transfer. If you have questions, call or e-mail 716-632-1330 or n.church@verizon.net. **Every gift makes a difference.**

Women's Circles

Sarah Circle meets Wednesday, March 8, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Ellie McConnell, 83 Wickham Dr., Williamsville. All are welcome.

Martha Circle meets Tuesday, March 14, at 1:00 p.m., in the church library. Pastor Bill will lead Lesson 8: "Who is Jesus According to the Other Abrahamic Faiths." All are welcome.

Youth News (7th-12th grade)

By Shared Youth Director Mack Barker

MOVIE NIGHT and LOCK-IN

Youth in grades 7 through 12 are invited to a movie night/lock-in at University Presbyterian Church on Friday, March 10, from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. If you have any questions, please contact Mack by e-mail or phone at (716) 553-6494.

Communion at Home

On the afternoons of the Sundays when communion is served at North Church, teams of elders and deacons take communion to

parishioners who are unable to attend the regular church service. The elements for the Lord's Supper will have been consecrated at the regular service. A reading of scripture and prayers accompany the distribution of the elements.

Friends and family are welcome to participate. Homebound parishioners known to the pastor will be contacted by telephone to see if the communion service is desired and to arrange for a time. If anyone wishes to receive communion at home, or if anyone knows of another person who wishes such to be provided, please call the church office at 716-632-1330, or speak to Pastor Bill or a deacon. If you have been ordained as an elder or deacon in the Presbyterian Church USA (even if you are not now actively serving) and would like to participate as a server in this ministry, please let Pastor Bill or a deacon know.



Let's Keep in Touch

Newsletter (*North Star*)

You can submit story ideas to <http://northchurchwilliamsville.org/weekly-bulletin-and-north-star/> as well as e-mailing it to n.church@verizon.net. The newsletter is produced in March, June, September, and December. The next **deadline is MAY 15**.

The newsletter is available online but we are happy to mail it to you if you wish.

Please call the office if you want it mailed to you.



Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/northchurchwilliamsville?ref=hl>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/>

Sunday Bulletin

If you have an announcement, please e-mail n.church@verizon.net by **noon on**

Wednesday or submit it to

<http://northchurchwilliamsville.org/weekly-bulletin-and-north-star/>

Weekly E-mail Blasts

This church-wide e-mail generally goes out on **Thursday evening**. If you are not receiving this communication but would like to, e-mail n.church@verizon.net to be added.

Pinterest

From books and favorite recipes to thoughts about volunteering and ideas about helping the homeless, we have pinned many interesting items.

<http://www.pinterest.com/northchurch/>

Phone

Your call is very important to us. We try to take every call but if we missed yours, please leave a message at 716.632.1330. We make every effort to return your call within 24 hours or less.

Phone Extensions:

- 21 Office/Cynthia Machamer
- 22 Bill Hennessy/Pastor
- 26 Mike Callaghan/Facilities
- 24 Marlene Harrington/Music
- 29 Karen Thomas/Bookkeeper
- 631-0979 Debbie Katz, Resource Center

The staff members listed below do not keep regular office hours and cannot be reached at the church with their own extensions; however, you may leave a message for them with the office administrator: Olivia Ebsary, dance; Tara Martin, web; Marty Shafer, children's choir; Regina Koterak, childcare; Mack Barker, shared youth director; and Kim Will, Sunday school coordinator.

Contact Information

300 North Forest Rd., Williamsville, NY 14221,
(716) 632-1330; fax (716) 632-1332

Office Hours: M-Th: 8:30-4:00; F: 8:30-12:30;

www.northchurchwilliamsville.org

E-mail: n.church@verizon.net

***“Followers of Jesus called together
in faith, hope and love.”***