

Steeple Stories

The newsletter of North Shore Baptist Church

DECEMBER 2018

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5244 N. Lakewood
Chicago, IL 60640

New Birth

Each day when I come into the office, I have a constant reminder of the joy, peace and love I have felt on the days when each of our children was born. I sit at my desk or turn to work on the computer, and strategically placed are pictures that show our two children at different stages of their lives and us as a family. Each time I return to my office, I am reminded of what the two of them mean to Barbara's and my life. I cannot help in these moments but to think of the first day we saw each of them. The moments when I am looking around or working on the computer, seeing the pictures of them and us as a family brings me back to the anticipation, expectation, and excitement of their births. It reminds me of the newness that has continued to flourish in our growing as a family.

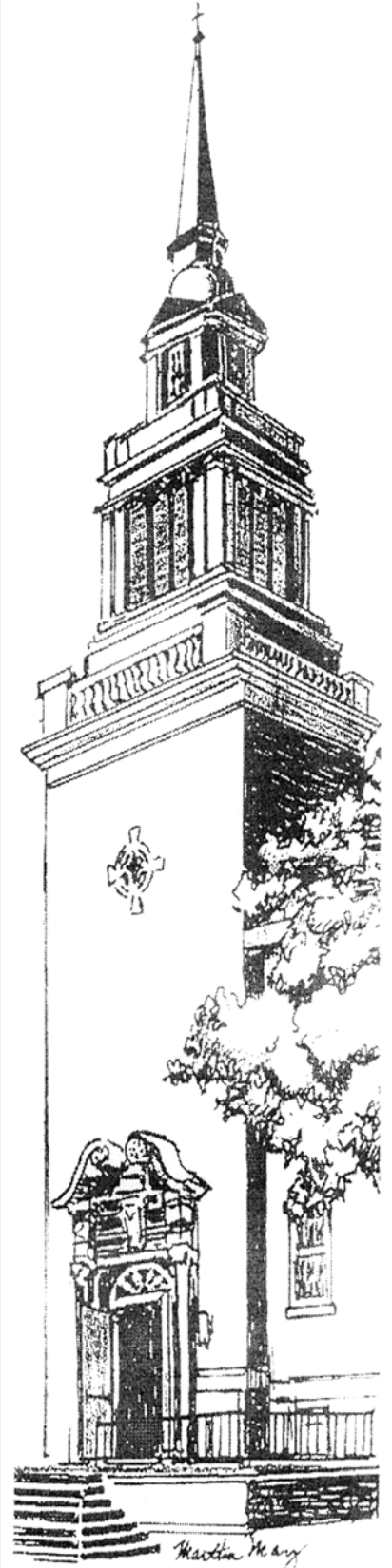
My friends, this has me thinking if Barbara and I had such feelings at birthing time, then what must Mary and Joseph have gone through? They were preparing for a child to be born when the mortality rate was very high. They did not have the modern comforts of doctors, nurses, and hospitals that we have today. And furthermore, this should have been a time when the people of the community came together, offering mutual support and assistance. But it did not happen that way for them. They had to leave the place they knew and go to a strange land. Yet, even in the midst of these conditions, I believe these parents looked forward with the same expectancy, desire, and enthusiasm that parents look forward to in this present age.

Thus, they took a journey so that new birth might happen, and what a delivery it turned out to be. I am sure there was a time when Mary and Joseph looked back and visualized a child born in a stable, attending temple together, Jesus wandering off to talk with the elders, healing the sick, and teaching that the lost might be found.

These were just some of the memories that must have signaled new birth during Jesus' life. For unto us a child was born, and their world, as well as ours, was never the same again.

Sisters and brothers, in this season of Advent and Christmas, what new birth do we need to have? Are we able to look inside ourselves that we might find new birth through Christ during this busy time

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of holiday celebrations? It can become so easy for us to focus on the spending and buying and forget that it's about Jesus. The stores and the media attempt to draw us away from that life-changing new birth from long ago to a mere holiday aimed at toys, gifts, and parties. Yet I caution each of us to value a renewed birth in Christ and take a personal look at our hearts, souls, and minds, that we be transfixed toward sharing the blessings of God so that others might know our Creator. This means taking a peek backwards at our children, families, friends, or neighbors and asking ourselves some questions. Have we shown the gift of new birth in offering forgiveness and understanding for a hurt we have caused or others have done to us? Can we say we've been a place of new birth that showed open arms to someone in need of food or shelter? Has there been a new birth of love that says we care for all God's children and not just some? I was reminded of all the new births my children and Christ have blessed me with. Now, I challenge you, too, to seek out those new birth experiences for yourselves, that God might be praised.

Have a Blessed Holiday Season.
Pastor Michael Ware

Hearing in Color and Seeing Clearly

North Shore Baptist Church holds an annual Martin Luther King Jr. event because that prophetic Baptist preacher's message echoes through the ages with a clarion call still needed today. **February 2-3, 2019** we will be hosting two events intended to stir our own members, reach our neighbors and revive all those in Chicago with eyes to see and ears to hear the call. In King's book *Strength to Love* (1963) he writes, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." As John 1:5 tells us, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." In what feels like very dark days, we know that the light of God's love is needed, so that we can see clearly and maybe even hear in color.

On Saturday afternoon, Feb. 2, as part of our annual MLK celebration, NSBC's Young Adult Initiative will be sponsoring and hosting Hearing in Color. Hearing in Color is a concert program aimed at highlighting music, composers, and performers who are often underrepresented in the musical world. Hearing in Color is dedicated to exposing our community to emerging artists, and shining light on cultural issues through the performance of music by composers of color. Hearing in Color passionately believes in the power of music to comfort, embolden, and inspire in the face of subjugation and oppression. Hearing in Color is led and co-founded by LaRob K. Payton, bass section leader of NSBC's Chancel Choir.

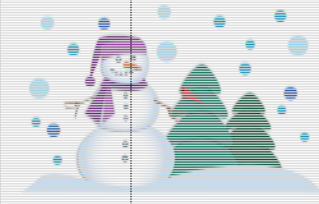

This concert on February 2nd will highlight music of African-American composers who challenged and questioned racism, composed despite constant injustice, and who found and shared spirituality among their community in the face of a dark world. Through notes, melodies, and words, we will hear stories that are often left untold or overlooked. We will share messages of love and justice to educate and call our community to action.

On Sunday, Feb. 3, after church Outreach Ministry is hosting a public talk and series of workshops on anti-racism and anti-bias training. Both days' events are in the planning stages and we are looking for local organizations who may want to partner with us, as well as NSBC members who want to join the planning team. We want this weekend of events to open our doors in a new way to our neighbors, and invite in all who are interested in the liberating work that MLK pursued to his last breath. If you want to get involved, reach out to Becca.Hartman@gmail.com or talk to anyone in the Outreach Ministry.





December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 9:30 am Spanish Worship 10 am English Worship 11 am Japanese Worship 11:15 am Fellowship Time 11:30 am Ad. In Learning 11:30 am Karen Worship	3 6:30 pm AA Meeting	4 7pm Church Council	5 6:30 pm Andersonville YPAA	6 4:00 Stewardship Ministry 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	7 6:00-8:00 pm FotL Youth Group	8 10 am AA Meeting 4 pm AA Meeting 10 am Spanish Bible Study 2:30pm Karen Programs 4:00 pm Karen Music Rehearsal
9 9:30 am Spanish Worship 10 am English Worship 11 am Japanese Worship 11:15 am Fellowship Time 11:30 am Ad. In Learning 11:30 am Karen Worship 2:00 pm LPHS Choir Concert	10 6:30 pm AA Meeting	11	12 6:30 pm Andersonville YPAA	13 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	14 6:00-8:00 pm FotL Youth Group	15 10 am AA Meeting 4 pm AA Meeting 10 am Spanish Bible Study 2:30pm Karen Programs 4:00 pm Karen Music Rehearsal
16 9:30 am Spanish Worship 10 am English Worship 11 am Japanese Worship 11:15 am Fellowship Time 11:30 am Ad. In Learning 11:30 am Karen Worship 12:30 Congregational Mtg.	17 6:30 pm AA Meeting	18	19 6:30 pm Andersonville YPAA	20 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	21 6:00-8:00 pm FotL Youth Group	22 10 am AA Meeting 4 pm AA Meeting 10 am Spanish Bible Study 2:30pm Karen Programs 4:00 pm Karen Music Rehearsal
23 Christmas Sunday 10:30 am Joint Worship 12:00 pm Posada & Potluck	24 6:30 pm AA Meeting 9:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 CHRISTMAS DAY <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> <u>Building Closed</u> </div>	26 <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> <u>Church Office Closed</u> Building open for Limited programming </div> 6:30 pm Andersonville YPAA	27	28	29 10 am AA Meeting 4 pm AA Meeting 10 am Spanish Bible Study 2:30pm Karen Programs 4:00 pm Karen Music Rehearsal
30 9:30 am Spanish Worship 10 am English Worship 11 am Japanese Worship 11:15 am Fellowship Time 11:30 am Karen Worship	31 6:30 pm AA Meeting	January 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> <u>Building Closed</u> </div>	2 	3	4	5 

Longest Night Service



During December, griefs and pains often grow harder to bear. As families gather, we remember those who are no longer with us, or disagreements that have left family estranged. The season of gift-giving puts strain on those already struggling to make ends meet. The cold and the dark can be hard on our bodies, bringing out aches, pains, illness, and depression.

It is important, through the various struggles of the season, to remember that we are not alone. On **December 19 at 7:00pm**, we will be offering a Longest Night Service on in **Nambu Chapel**. It will be a candlelight service at which we will hold silence, pray, and reflect both on what we have lost in the past year and what has sustained us.

Tough Transitions

As we reflect upon 2018, many have experienced significant changes this year- a birth, changes in health, starting a new school, graduating or retirement, a different job, home, or perhaps a move from one state or country to another. Even our church is in a transition as there have been several staff changes this year. Below are thoughts about handling transitions.

Transitions can be joyful, stressful, or both. Even enjoyable changes can bring stress. We get attached to the familiar and resist change, which can be scary. Letting go can feel like a loss and may trigger emotions usually associated with grief- like denial, anger, wanting control (i.e. bargaining, negotiating), and sadness- regardless of whether we see the change as good or bad. (An example- the rich, young ruler had difficulty letting go of his old life and the privilege of money as Jesus asked, so he left feeling very sad.)

Can we skip transitioning? There is a tendency to move directly from the old and into the new- skipping over the uncomfortable middle. Processing the transition is important because it helps us to fully understand how our feelings are connected to each of those events, otherwise complications can occur which prolong suffering and we risk repeating the past without truly moving forward. (Jonah is an example of a man who was constantly unhappy with transitions- especially when he was so ready to see Nineveh's destruction and <spoiler alert> *it didn't happen.*)

Faith in God's timing- We can clearly see the Israelite's transition from slavery in Egypt to preparing to enter the Promised Land. They were in such a hurry to leave their old lives behind that they didn't realize they were bringing it with them. When they became scared, they reverted back to the old culture of idol worship. Some even wanted to go back to Egypt, where slavery was preferable to the unknown. Once they trusted God for their survival, they were able to move on and break from the past.

Change can bring good things. When things are good, we want it to stay the same. Unfortunately, if something doesn't change, it can't grow. In business, some companies never change and become obsolete while others shift their mission to adapt to changing needs. If leadership never changes, then others will not have an opportunity to exercise their gifts and that can stunt growth opportunities.

How should we process change? Jesus had two very significant transitions in his life: preparation for ministry and preparation for death. Both were preceded by solitude and prayer, reflecting from where he came, clarifying his purpose and direction (sometimes accompanied by doubts and temptations which help to sharpen focus), gathering strength, and preparing support.

The essentials of transitions- When it comes to the New Year, changes in life, or transitions at NSBC, remember: Pause, let go of the past, evaluate the present, allow time for transition, accept it and adapt to the new with faith in God.

Dave Howser, M.Div., LCPC is a psychotherapist and pastoral counselor at North Shore Baptist Church. To inquire about NSBC member benefits, please call Dave at (773)450-3395.



What's Up With Our Youth?

Last month, **Viola Mayol** joined us for two youth group sessions and led us through process art (*pictured below*). In process art, you set an intention for your work, and then create art silently. Afterwards, you write a reflection on your intention and your art, and share it with the group. No comments are allowed.



Thank you to Viola for leading us through this creative, reflective process!



This month, we again look forward to doing *Secret Santa*, and joining the Hispanic congregation for part of their half-vigil on **December 14**.



50+ Year Members

We wish to honor these 50 + year Members of North Shore Baptist Church whose examples of Christian joy, dedication to Christ, and faithfulness to North Shore and its ministry continue to bless us.

1947—Robert Dold
 1949—Marjorie Bailey
 1955—Flo Reeves
 Gloria Russell
 1956—Donna Barlow
 1957—Jackie Gunther
 Hiroko Shimotake

1959—Diana Hoffman
 Masaru Nambu
 1961—Vivian Berget
 1962—Margo Bach
 Judith Dold
 Emy Kosmas
 1964—Barbara Rosga

1965—Berlene Hermer
 1966—Hiroshi (Paul) Shimotake
 1967—Kuwako Arai
 1968—Nancy Davis
 Barbara Lehman
 Stanley Lehman

Cocoa & Carols

Plan to join us on Sunday,

December 9 at 2 pm.



for the annual concert of holiday music given by the Chamber Singers of Lincoln Park High School. The program will include selections both serious and light. Seasonal treats will be served and the choir will lead a Christmas carol sing-along.

We request that all members attend

December 16, 2018 at 12:30PM

Congregational Meeting



so that we can present, discuss and vote on the 2019 Church Budget. It is very important that we have all present for this important decision in the life of our Church.

Copies of the proposed budget will be available on Sunday December 9, so you can review it before the meeting on the 16th.



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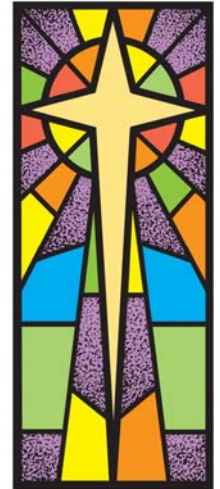
e-mail: office@northshorebaptist.org

North Shore Baptist Church

*"Serving All God's People
From This Corner"*

We're on the Web:

www.northshorebaptist.org



"Beautiful music...is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us." — Martin Luther

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY ~ CHRISTMAS EVE

SUNDAY December 23rd - 10:30 a.m.



How exciting it will be on December 23rd as we come together to celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent as one church! We will gather as family at North Shore in a service of unity to continue on our journey toward Christmas. We will experience lots of Christmas hymns, a scripture, and reflections. On this Sunday of Advent we focus on love. What better way to do so than to gather as a whole family of God in worship this day? Each congregation will be asked to decorate hearts for this service, which will be presented during our worship time. For the guest, new or old-time member; come to this glorious time of celebration as we conclude this Advent Season.

POSADA: After the joint worship service on December 23, we will gather in Howel Hall to eat a potluck meal hosted by the Hispanic congregation and sing villancicos (Spanish Christmas carols).



MONDAY December 24th - 9:00 p.m.



CHRISTMAS EVE - The English Language Congregation will again share this meaningful opportunity to tell the Christmas story through lessons and carols of the season. As the service culminates in a candlelight singing of "Silent Night, Holy Night," we can experience the birth of Jesus in its full power and humbleness, born in a manger to a poor family, born to transform the world.

If you would like to receive *Steeple Stories* by e-mail (in color!), contact us at office@northshorebaptist.org