

Steeple Stories

The newsletter of North Shore Baptist Church

5244 N. Lakewood
Chicago, IL 60640

The Karen: Sharing Love to Neighbors

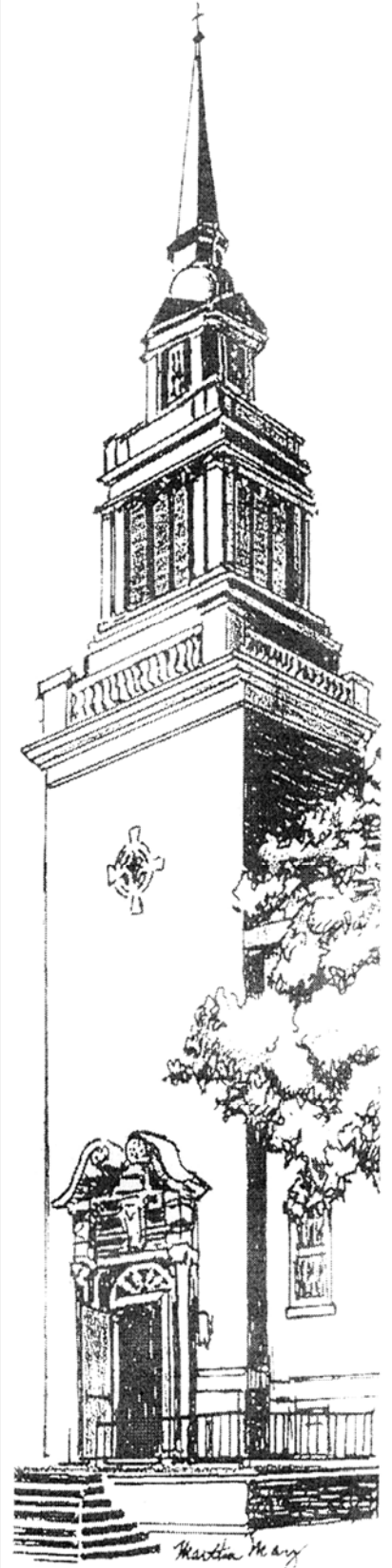
In Luke 12, Jesus gives us a valuable “Parable about the Rich Fool” that teaches us the danger of attachment to worldly wealth. Jesus invites us to search for the right thing, which is heavenly wealth that cannot be destroyed. Jesus was exposing the multitude to vital truths pertaining to the kingdom of God and teaching about the danger of rejecting the gospel and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. In verse 31, Jesus concludes his teaching about the search for the Kingdom of God by reminding us that God will surely fulfill whatever we need in this world.

Based on this parable, I would like to talk about sharing our love to people in need. In sharing our love to others, I believe that we can overcome our natural desire to be attached to worldly material and we can accept the invitation of Jesus to live for others. In sharing our love, we can overcome our selfishness, so that our lives will bear witness to the reality of the Kingdom of God. Jesus teaches us in the Gospel of Matthew 22:37-39 to love your God and your neighbors. This requirement is not only for the fulfillment of the laws. It also focuses us on what it means to be children of God, who have a responsibility to connect with our God and our neighbors.

Abandoning our worldly attachment to material wealth and sharing our love to other is not an easy process. To fulfill Jesus’ commandment to “Love your Enemies” is a great challenge for all of us.

As a young man who grew up in Burma, one of the poorest countries in the world, the Christian message about the Gospel is an ex-

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trremely challenging message for me. As a member of an extremely poor family, lack of money was the main obstacle to getting a good education. As a member of the Christian minority, it is very difficult for me to have confidence in myself living in society, so that I have only a few friends outside Christianity. As a member of an ethnic minority, which is being oppressed by the majority community, my ethnic people's experience of bitterness and hatred influences my thought and my personal concept of life. As a member of a conservative Baptist tradition, I have been taught to separate from the outside world, especially from the Buddhist community.

But I now understand that God wants me to serve his mission of love and reconciliation among different people from different traditions. I know that God wants me to share my love with my neighbors, including members of the majority who are still oppressing our people. I know that God wants me to see a full vision of peaceful community, like the Davidic kingdom envisioned in Psalm 89. I know that God wants to use me for an ecumenical ministry among the different Christian denominations, especially for the cooperation between Anglican churches and Baptist churches.

When I consider the will of God for me, I always doubt that it is possible for me to fulfill. It is impossible to give full leadership to the entire community because of my limited talent. It is impossible to provide sufficient food to the hungry in my surroundings because of the poor situation of my family. It is impossible to stand as an activist for ecumenical ministry for all different denominations because of my limited traditional heritage. It is impossible to give my love and my meaningful service to the military dictatorship-based Burmese majority because of my being as an oppressed ethnicity.

Some Karen arrived in Chicago to start a new journey of life. Because of the hospitality and love of the North Shore Baptist Church, they could begin their new spiritual journey here. As NSBC showed its loves to us, we the Karen must understand that we have responsibility to show our love to other people. In this spirit, we are ready to serve for our church, our community, our friends and our neighbors both for Burma and in the United States. Some would say that serving our community is an impossible thing since they are very busy with jobs, studies, and other matters of living in Chicago. However, we must understand that sharing our love and serving our community is possible if we take strength in the power of God.

Romans 4:19-25 teaches that "there is no impossible in God and in faith." Although Abraham's condition made it impossible in nature to beget generations of children, by faithful faith in God, he saw no impossibility in God's promise to him. I know that all things in my future are impossible in nature, but by faith, by grace and by the power of God, all impossibilities will be demolished for my future ministry.

~Saw Solomon Opehtoo

Pastoral Search Update








**PASTORAL
SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Both the Karen and English-language pastoral searches are progressing apace. The English Language Pastor Search Committee has reviewed dozens of candidates, gathered additional information from promising candidates and in late spring will move forward with the next stage of the process, Skype interviews. The Karen Pastoral Search Committee has extended an invitation to a candidate for an interview this month. Please keep both these committees in your prayers as we await the results of their hard work on behalf of our community!

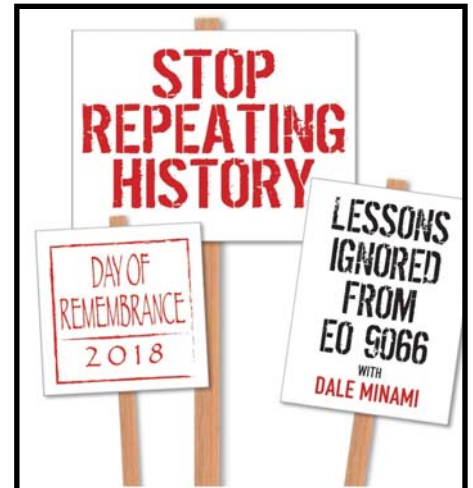


March

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:30 Chancel Choir	2 6:00-8:00 pm FotL Youth Group 7pm Spanish Bible Study	3 10 am AA Meeting 4 pm AA Meeting 10 am Spanish Bible Study 4:00 pm Karen Music Rehearsal
4 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 pm Karen Worship	5 6:30 pm AA Meeting	6 7pm Property Min.	7 6:30 pm Andersonville YPAA	8 4:00 Stewardship Ministry 7:30 Chancel Choir	9 6:00-8:00 pm FotL Youth Group 7pm Spanish Bible Study	10 10 am AA Meeting 4 pm AA Meeting 10 am Spanish Bible Study 4:00 pm Karen Music Rehearsal
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25  9:30 am Spanish Worship 9:45 PALM PROCESSION 10 am English Worship 11 am Japanese Worship 11:15 am Fellowship Time 11:30 am Ad. In Learning 11:30 pm Karen Worship	26 6:30 pm AA Meeting	27	28 6:30 pm Andersonville YPAA	29 7:30 Chancel Choir	30  Good Friday 7:30 English Worship 7:30 Spanish Worship	31 10 am AA Meeting 4 pm AA Meeting 10 am Spanish Bible Study 4:00 pm Karen Music Rehearsal

Day of Remembrance 2018

This year's Day of Remembrance was titled "Stop Repeating History." The Keynote Speaker, Dale Minami, a civil rights attorney, shared his stories on heading the legal team that represented Fred Korematsu in the 1980s. The event was very well attended including some familiar faces from NSBC as well. (Thank you!) As for what we can do to "Stop Repeating History" today, Mr. Minami mentioned we can raise our voices to preserve the Japanese American Confinement Sites Program (JACS). This is a National Parks Service grant program that distributes funds nationally to preserve the important history of Japanese incarceration during WWII. However, the current federal administration's FY2019 budget proposal cuts funding for this program. If you are interested in learning more about and preserving this program as well as appealing to local representatives, please go to the link of Japanese American Citizen League Chicago Chapter - <http://jaclchicago.org/fund-jacs/>



Young Adult Initiative



NSBC will serve as a Launching Congregation for the Young Adult Initiative, sponsored by Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary's Innovation Hub. The purpose of the Initiative is to develop new ministries aimed at adults between 18 and 35. During the spring, **Sam Hartman-Pickerill** and **Pastor Kathryn** will participate in a "Religious and Spiritual Lives of Young Adults" course, in which we will be guided through a process to design new young adult ministries. In July, we will be eligible to receive a grant of up to \$30,000 from the Lilly Endowment to fund a new ministry initiative. Over the next two years, we will then participate in a monthly peer coaching group to support that ministry initiative.

To begin this process, we are conducting an **all-church survey**. The purpose of the survey is learn more about the passions, visions, and frustrations of our church participants. This will help us identify the strengths and resources we have for new ministries, as well as existing obstacles. For example, we could have a great outreach program, but new participants sense there is great conflict in the church, and do not return. Conversely, we could have worship services and ministries our community is very excited about, but we are not communicating about those services to the wider neighborhood. This information will help us not only develop new ministries, but also achieve deeper understanding of our existing programs and relationships.

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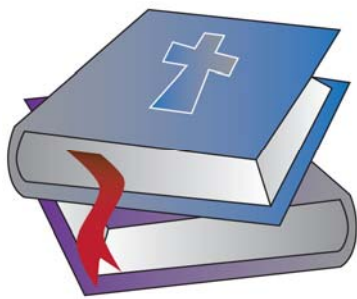
What's Up With Our Youth?



The youth group had a very full month of February. It began with a trip to Millennium Park for ice skating, and was the first time some of the youth had put on ice skates. While there were multiple falls, fortunately there were no injuries. Over President's Day weekend, we went on retreat. **Sam, Becca, and Nora Hartman-Pickerill**, along with **Maura Galarza** and **Pastor Kathryn**, accompanied 17 youth to Camp Tamarack in Wisconsin. The text for the weekend was Ephesians 2:13-14, "for Christ has torn down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." We discussed how we build walls around others, and how others build walls around us. We explored how we, like Jesus, can tear down walls in our lives. We also did some winter hiking, the highlight of which was coming across the remains of a deer that had likely been attacked by wolves.



Adventures in Learning Update



We have had some exciting new initiatives in Adventures in Learning adult classes in this new year. Last fall, Pastor Rony taught a course in Spanish on Revelation as an example of apocalyptic literature. This winter, he is repeating the course in English. Meanwhile, Pastor Kathryn teamed up with Olga Diaz to offer continued study on Revelation in Spanish. Following up on the themes and literary patterns Pastor Rony taught about, Pastor Kathryn and Olga dove into some of the key passages of the text. Pastor David stayed busy teaching a class exploring the meaning of membership at NSBC, and we will look forward to welcoming some new members in the near future.

For Lent, Pastor Kathryn is teaching a course on liberationist theologies and the crucifixion. Delving into our theme question for Lent this year- "Why did Jesus die?"- the class considers various reflections on the meaning of Jesus' suffering in light of the suffering of marginalized peoples. Sources for reflection range from James Cone, the father of Black liberation theology, to the feminicide in Ciudad Juárez, to Beyoncé's Lemonade.



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North Shore Baptist Church

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

We're on the Web:

www.northshorebaptist.org

"Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire."

- St. Catherine of Siena



Holy Week 2018

As Holy Week approaches, with its climax in the Resurrection power of God's love in the world, North Shore is offering special observances and celebrations.

- **Palm Sunday - 9:45 am.** The Spanish language and English language congregations will gather together in the memorial garden courtyard (or the gym if the weather is bad) to sing Hosannas and process into worship, led by children and waving palms.
- **Good Friday** - there will be two worship services both at **7:30 p.m.**, one in English (in the Sanctuary) and one in Spanish (in Howel Hall). Each will focus on the crucifixion as a revelation of God's love and of the promise of Liberation.
- **Holy Saturday Intergenerational Event** - The Spanish Language Congregation will spend time Saturday in devotional prayer and study, with activities also planned for children. More details TBA.

Sunday - Easter worship. Each congregation celebrates in its own way, according to the regular schedule: Spanish Language 9:30, English Language 10:00, Japanese Language 11:00, Karen Language 11:30. Special music, songs and prayers, resurrection preaching, and lilies, combine to make North Shore a glorious tapestry of "Alleluia!"- Many languages- One church! We will celebrate the ordinance of Baptism at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary; members from all congregations will gather to witness the testimony to faith in baptism by immersion.



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