



North Star

Spring 2025

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From the Pastor's Desk . . .

This year, Easter falls on April 20th, which is just two days before Earth Day. Earth Day began on April 22, 1970, as a nationwide teach-in organized by Senator Gaylord Nelson. Nelson was a governor and senator from Wisconsin, elected to the Senate in 1962, the same year as the publication of Rachel Carson's groundbreaking book *Silent Spring*, exposing the long term dangers of pollution on air and water quality in the US. Nelson had been a strong advocate for conservation and the environment throughout his political career. The teach-in in 1970 is estimated to have included around 20 million Americans. It galvanized public support for the Nixon Administration's proposal to create the Environmental Protection Agency, which was established in December of 1970.

What does any of that have to do with Easter? Nothing directly, I suppose. But every so often the two dates converge, and when they do it's an opportunity to look at Easter in light of the health and wholeness of the planet and all of us who live here. Easter is an affirmation of life. Jesus' death is overcome as God's "Yes," not just to humanity but to the power of life and hope. Earth Day is one expression of that hope. Even when it seems like there's nothing we can do to stop or reverse the damage done to our planet-home, we hold out hope

that forces can be brought to bear to put changes in place that can heal our planet.

We do this not only for our own survival, but as an acknowledgment of God's presence in creation. In his book *Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul*, John Philip Newell looks back to the writings of Irenaeus of Lyons who lived in the middle to late second century. Irenaeus was from the region known as Gaul by the Romans, which is the origin for the Celtic people of Scotland and Ireland. Among his writings are arguments against certain views held by other Christian theologians, among them the idea of *creatio ex nihilo*, or "creation from nothing." Irenaeus believed the matter of the universe was not called into being by God from nothing but "taught that the universe is born out of the 'substance' of God." This means all matter is sacred; all matter is an extension of God. The Franciscans would say "creation is God's first incarnation."

So, in our desire to protect and heal the planet we are serving God. Many world religions, especially Native American religion in our country, have a similar view when it comes to reverence of nature. Our world is not seen merely as a resource to be used but as a sacred trust to be cherished. That perspective has been suppressed in much Christian thought when we focus on the idea of God bringing creation to an end and replacing it with a "new heaven and new earth." But even in those few writings that idea isn't meant to give license to destruction of the planet. In Revelation we hear "see, the home of God is among mortals!" Surely, we have a responsibility to care for that home in the meantime.

This year, Easter and Earth Day are an opportunity to lift up all of life in gratitude and hope. Just as Christ's death is reversed and resurrection is proclaimed, we can envision reversing the damage to our planet and joyfully work to heal earth, sea and sky as our response to God's presence among us.

Peace,

Pastor Bill

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Earth Day

by Reyne Jankowski

I distinctly remember the first Earth Day in 1970 (I think I was in 8th grade-wow!), and I do remember it being a big deal at the time. I'll admit I haven't given it much thought over the years. Sure, it's a date on the calendar that I'm reminded of every year, but I never really paid much attention to all the hoopla.

Earth Day is April 22 every year and, as I've recently come to find out, is now recognized as an international holiday. Earth Day has been an annual event since 1970 and it is a day for us to demonstrate our support for environmental protection.

Senator Gaylord Nelson chose April 22 because it fell on a weekday between spring break and final exams at colleges, making it easier for students to participate. The goal was to attract as many students as possible to the environmental movement, and the date was chosen to maximize their participation.

The first Earth Day was a pivotal moment in raising public awareness about environmental issues and sparking the modern environmental movement. The focus in that first year was to raise public awareness about air and water pollution that was inspired by a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California.

By the end of 1970, the first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of other first-of-their-kind environmental laws, including the National Environmental Education Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Clean Air Act. Two years later congress passed the Clean Water Act.

Each year the organizers choose a different theme to focus on. In 2024 the theme was *Planet vs. Plastics* and the focus was on working to eliminate plastic usage "for the sake of human and planetary health" and to decrease plastic production by 60 percent by 2040.

The theme for Earth Day 2025 is "OUR POWER, OUR PLANET," inviting everyone to unite behind renewable energy and triple the global generation of clean electricity by 2030.

[EARTHDAY.ORG](https://earthday.org), formerly known as Earth Day Network, grew out of the first Earth Day in 1970. It now works with over 150,000 partners in over 192 countries to drive positive action for the planet.

EARTHDAY.ORG's mission is to diversify, educate, and activate the environmental movement worldwide. In 1990, Denis Hayes, the original national coordinator in 1970, took the Earth Day movement international, organizing events in 141 nations.

I encourage you to visit [EARTHDAY.ORG](https://earthday.org)'s website for inciteful information about the origin of Earth Day and how you can be a part of the grass root efforts of preserving our planet.

This is our home and we all have a responsibility to preserve it for future generations.



Property Updates

Nonprofit Security Grant (NPSG) Update

by Joe Alber

As reported at the Annual Meeting the security system was completed in late January. It consists of door access controls with intercoms, alarms on the two emergency doors and four panic alarms in separate areas of the church that are manually activated, and ten cameras: four outside over the doors and six inside covering the hallways.

A Request for Proposals for replacement of the two doors at the end of the wings was drafted and mailed in February to a pre-selected list of ten local companies. A legal notice was also published in the Buffalo News to capture the attention of any firms in the area that may have been skipped during the telephone survey searching for local vendors. The closing date for submitting a proposal was March 11 and the review of the proposals has started. It is anticipated that once the vendor is selected it will take about two months for the doors to be made and installed.

There are two remaining pieces of the grant. The first is the installation of an impact resistant film on the ground level windows, sometimes referred to as “safety” or “security” film. This functions somewhat like the glass in the windshield of a car. It will break, but not shatter, so it will slow down an intruder trying to gain entry. A letter with details is being sent in a few days to a group of mostly local companies that sell and install the film.

The final project is placing barriers of some kind that will likely be planters strategically located to prevent someone driving a vehicle through any of the doors. Identifying the barriers is just getting started. One of the issues the Committee has addressed beyond the scope of the grant is whether this is a good time to enhance the appearance of the church campus. The

feeling of the Committee is that there is no better time than right now.

To that end a proposal is being drafted for Session to discuss at its April meeting that provides a rationale for undertaking a professionally designed and executed, modestly priced and low-maintenance landscaping effort primarily focused on the main entrance and the South side of the building, including the area around the church’s sign along North Forest Road. If anyone has ideas regarding landscaping, please share them with a member of the Committee.

If you have any questions about the grant, please don’t hesitate to ask any of the committee members: Joe Alber, Randy Bigler, Livy Ebsary, Reyne Jankowski and Pastor Hennessy.

P.S. At the successful conclusion of the grant a “formal” safety committee is going to be formed. It is hoped when the call goes out seeking members, there will be individuals who will step forward to serve. The ability of the grant to achieve its intended purpose depends on establishing the necessary involvement of the congregation.

Mission in Action

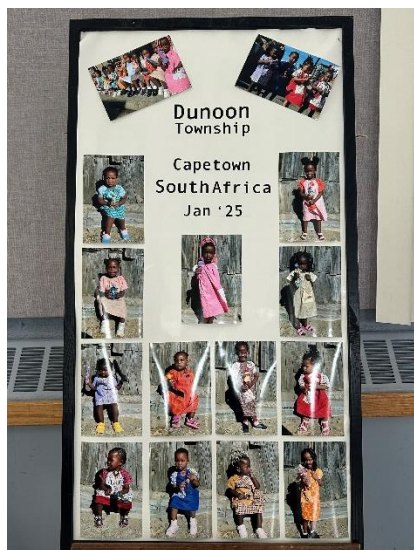
Dress A Girl

The North Church Dress A Girl group had an amazing and busy year in 2024. In June they emptied their cupboard and sent 100 dresses with Mission workers to Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

This dedicated group of sewers and crafters immediately got back to work and started working on another 100+ dresses and yarn dolls. These were packed up and passed on to groups who delivered them:

- 50 dresses and dolls went to Jamaica with Global Health Volunteers.
- A package of 40 went to Bawaleshie Elementary and Middle School, a rural school in the Greater Accra region of Ghana, West Africa.

- The remaining items traveled with Livy Ebsary to Cape Town, South Africa for a local school.



At the March gathering of the Dress A Girl group, Kofi Fynn-Aikins, a PhD (retired), president of the board of Hosikids, which supports the development of Bawaleshie Elementary and Middle School, a rural school in the Greater Accra region of Ghana, West Africa <https://hosikids.org/>, stopped by to share some information about the school he supports and brought us a framed version of this photo.



School in Ghana where dresses were sent in January

We thank the church and the congregation for their support and encouragement. We send appreciation to all our volunteers who are so hardworking to keep up with this project.

If you have an interest in sewing or hand crafts, please consider joining the Dress A Girl group who meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month from 12 to 4 pm in Westminster Hall. Enjoy a simple salad lunch and fellowship while sewing dresses and crafting matching yarn dolls.

Advocacy and Outreach

Thanks to the generosity of NPC members, Advocacy and Outreach was able to send \$5,000 each to Big Big Table and Family Promise, our choices to receive the 2024 Christmas Offering.

Because of the continuing crisis regarding legal aliens who were sent to the Buffalo area, A & O sent \$2,000 to Journey's End in February. They are part of a larger association, Refugee Partnership of WNY. We also designated March 2 and 9 as Sundays to collect a special offering from the congregation for this ongoing crisis. \$2,020 was contributed and has been sent to the Refugee Partnership. We sponsored three speakers who specifically, and eloquently, addressed the needs of the above agencies.

We continue to monitor this crisis and ask you to call your elected representative and senators and urge them to urge the government to honor its promise to these legal aliens which was to support them for 90 days with shelter, food, job applications, school registration, etc. so that they can begin to resume a normal life.

Under the leadership of Jim Loree, an A & O committee member, we are spearheading the "You don't need to think alike to love alike" campaign. More will be forthcoming.

Lent is the time for One Great Hour of Sharing. The children have their fish banks and members have the opportunity to contribute to this plea worldwide to address global needs.

Kerri Bigler, another A & O committee member, has updated the list of agencies which will accept gently used items. You can find this on the church website. Thank you to the congregation for their input. If you made a suggestion and it is not included in the list, that is because the list is titled Used Items.

Please note that A & O has NO benevolence budget. Our small line item covers mailing. We are able to make contributions because of an anonymous, but generous, donation from a church member.



by Olivia Ebsary

Simple Steps to a Healthier YOU!!

Let's enter spring with a new attitude about your own self-care! Here are some simple things to consider.

Exercise 3-5 times a week or I like to say more days of the week than not..MOVE!

Find activities you enjoy, whether it's walking, yoga, strength training, or dancing as they will also help you manage stress. 😊

Drink More Water and Limit Sugary Drinks and Alcohol

Staying hydrated is essential for digestion, energy levels, and overall health. Listen to your body's thirst cues. Try those flavor infused drinks instead of sugary ones.

Eat More Whole Foods, Less Processed Foods

Learn to read labels to know what you are getting. Reduce portion size!

Cut Back on White Sugar, White Flour, White Rice, White Potatoes, and Salt

These refined foods can cause blood sugar spikes and contribute to inflammation. Opt for whole-grain alternatives, sweet potatoes, and herbs for flavor.

Prioritize Sleep (7-8 Hours Per Night)

Quality sleep is just as important as diet and exercise. Create a bedtime routine, limit screen time before bed, and ensure your sleep environment is comfortable.

Measure Progress by How You Feel

While weight and measurements can be helpful, the most important sign of progress is your energy levels, mood, and overall well-being. You'll know just by how you feel!

This 'n That

Welcome New Members!

North Church was pleased to welcome Keith Gillogly into membership during the morning worship service on March 2, 2025. Keith and his wife Brittany and son Quinn reside in Depew. Please join us in welcoming new friends into the fold!

Baptisms



"Every good and perfect gift is from above..."

James 1:17

North Church is pleased to welcome two new little ones into the fold!

Everett Oliver Ebsary, son of Madison and Kurt Ebsary (born May 21, 2024) was baptized on October 20, 2024. Grandparents are Olivia and Jeff Ebsary.



Kurt, Everett, Adelaide & Madison Ebsary

Wyatt Robert Overdorf, son of Victoria (Roetzer) and Brendan Overdorf (born July 17, 2024) was baptized on March 9, 2025. Colleen Dempsey is the proud Grandmother!



Wyatt, Tori & Brendan Overdorf

Members in the News

Proud Great-Grandparents!

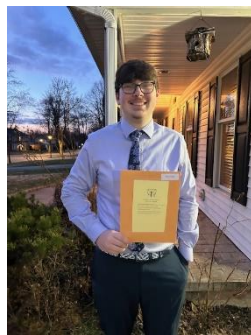


Kai Harrington, the great-granddaughter of Marge and Harvey Blakely who is finishing up her freshman year at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, has chosen to attend opera

master classes in New York City at the Queens Vocal Institute this summer. At the end of two weeks, Kai will be performing in the ensemble in *Orpheus in the Underworld*. Kai is also the understudy for one of the leads.

Congratulations!

Henry Hutton, a junior at Williamsville East High School and North Presbyterian Church member, was inducted into his high school chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) on March 26, 2025. The pillars of NHS are knowledge, scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Way to go, Henry!



Birthday Bags

The Sunday School organized the Birthday Bags project again this year. The kids had fun filling the bags and the older "former" Sunday School kids were on hand with helpful suggestions and quality control! Jonathan Roesser delivered 51 complete Birthday Bags to the University Presbyterian Church Food Pantry, and the Pantry was extremely grateful.

Many thanks to the members in the congregation who supplied items and money to fill the Birthday Bags. Another example of North Church's generosity!



Keep Fit!

LifeFitness with Olivia

Classes are specifically designed to support older adults in maintaining strength, flexibility, balance and overall well-being.

Circuit Mon 9 am

Chair Yoga Mon/Wed 10 am

Pilates Tues 10:45 am

Zumba Wed 9 am

Classes are free, no registration!

****as schedule can vary please email*

oliviaebsary@gmail.com for more up to date details

Looking Ahead



Louise Cooper is busy planning three opportunities again this summer to enjoy delicious Weidner's famous chicken BBQ dinners to support the work and mission of North Church.

Please, mark your calendars with the following dates!

Wednesday, May 21

Wednesday, July 16

Wednesday, September 17

And while you're jotting down the dates, also think about where you can help. Event coordinator, Louise Cooper, is looking for some helpers! We need ticket sellers, kitchen help, and runners. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Louise or the Church Office. Many hands make light work!

Watch the Thursday *News from North* email for all the details and ticket information as we get closer to the dates. Thanks for all your help!

Mark Your Calendars

April 13 – Palm Sunday
April 17 – Maundy Thursday
April 18 – Good Friday
April 20 – Easter Sunday
April 21 – Easter Monday – ***Office Closed***
April 26 – OneWorld Choir Showcase & Concert
May 3 – Memorial Service for Mary Ann Mache
May 20 – ConnectLife Blood Drive
May 26 – Memorial Day – ***Office Closed***
June 7 – Memorial Service for Mary Kasbohm
June 14 – Memorial Service for Bill Townsend

Final Thoughts

Your North Church Family Wants to Know About YOU!

We would love for North Church Members to share about the activities of their children and grandchildren. It is important to us to know more about our Youth and what makes them *More Than Enough!* (Montreat 2022 theme).

Please share concert and athletic schedules, pictures and achievements, a short story about a youth you know who is related to North Church. *Together We are North!*

Share Your Ideas

Do you have an interesting story or idea you would like to share in an upcoming issue of the NorthStar? All submissions are welcome! Just email your stories and ideas to n.church.npc@gmail.com and we'll do our best to include them in an upcoming edition.

The NorthStar is published in January, April, July, and October. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month before publication.

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