

North Star



Fall 2025

October / November / December

An e-publication of North Presbyterian Church

From the Pastor's Desk . . .

When things seem out of control, it can be hard holding onto what's permanent and stable. I heard that during the weekend of September 26th – 28th there were six incidents of mass shootings in our country. They were in different places, under different circumstances and certainly with different motives, but all of them resulted in the same thing: death and injury of innocent people. I cannot imagine how it must feel to have a loved one ripped away by such an act of violence. It feels like our world is spiraling out of control.

Coincidentally, this week in the lectionary we have a selection from Lamentations. Lamentations is found in the section of the Old Testament right after Jeremiah. It's not written by him, but it refers to the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon which occurred during Jeremiah's activity. It begins with the words: "How lonely sits the city that once was full of people! How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations!" Jerusalem is in that condition because of outside forces that came and destroyed it, carrying its population away into exile in Babylon. But our cities, too, are in pain after the effects of a

mass shooting event. Many of us can remember how it felt in Buffalo after the Tops shooting took so many innocent lives and caused such terrible devastation. It shakes a city, even one as large and tough as Buffalo, to its core.

In places like Gran Blanc, Michigan, and Alexandria, Louisiana, Raleigh and Southport, North Carolina, and Eagle Pass, Texas, shootings occurred out of nowhere in a church, at a casino, on the highway, and at a bar. All different places, with different sorts of people in them. But now, all these communities have this in common. Now they are part of a massive and growing statistic of mass shootings in our country, of mindless violence, that only leaves grief and misery in its wake.

How do we live with hope under the shadow of so much sadness? What can we hang onto in times of uncertainty and collapse? Lamentations offers one possibility: "The thoughts of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall! My soul continually thinks of it and it bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, God's mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in the Lord.'" Even in their despair, they found solace in God's steadfast love.

To me, that means we cannot give up on each other. Even though we are surrounded by threats of violence and fear, we cannot stop loving one another and reaching out in compassion to reveal God's steadfast love in the world. We can do that by responding to gun violence, by pressing our leaders to enact common sense gun control laws. We can do it by standing with victims of violence and offering comfort. We can extend God's love by advocating for immigrants and refugees who feel under siege in our community.

In short, even when things seem to be out of control, we can stand firm on our commitment to love our neighbors and put our trust in God's love to strengthen and sustain us even in the midst of pain and sadness. We can't control everything in our world, but we can make the choice not to be overwhelmed by fear but to live in hope. As we approach the last months of this tumultuous year, I encourage you to put your trust in God's steadfast love and let it strengthen you to lift your head and to love those around you without fear.

Peace,

Pastor Bill

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Fall Harvest

by Reyne Jankowski

Do you know what I love most about Fall? **EVERYTHING!**

Cool days and crisp nights. The changing color of leaves on the trees. Fall decorations and cozy sweaters. Pumpkins and apples. That first taste of fresh apple cider and a powdered donut. Halloween and Thanksgiving.

Fall is the traditional time to harvest, the culmination of many months of hard work and tender care. The word *harvest* comes from the Old English word for autumn, *Haerfest*, which means to reap, gather and store what has been grown. Many cultures around the world celebrate the harvest season with traditions and festivals, such as Thanksgiving.

The Bible has a lot to say about harvest.

"Then the earth will yield its harvests, and God, our God, will richly bless us." (Psalm 67:6). This verse expresses joy and gratitude for God's abundant provision and blessings on the earth's produce.

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Gal. 6:9). This speaks of harvest not just as an agricultural event but as a symbol of spiritual growth, provision, and God's blessings.

Once the harvest is done, it's time to rest, regenerate our energy, and reflect on the blessings that have been bestowed upon us. Let us worship the Lord with gratitude and thanksgiving. What are you grateful for?



Financial Summary Through August 2025

	<u>YTD</u> <u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ANNUAL</u> <u>BUDGET</u>
INCOME:			
Donations	\$193,283	\$181,336	\$272,000
Building Use	\$46,863	\$48,000	\$72,000
Investment & Other Income	\$28,129	\$25,734	\$38,600
Total Income	\$268,275	\$255,070	\$382,600
	<u>YTD</u> <u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ANNUAL</u> <u>BUDGET</u>
EXPENSES:			
Personnel	\$198,281	\$191,610	\$287,408
Property	\$75,140	\$59,142	\$88,700
Programs	\$3,006	\$3,864	\$5,800
Total Expenses	\$276,427	\$254,616	\$381,908
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(\$8,152)	\$454	\$692

Summary: At the end of August, North Church has a year-to-date deficit of \$8,152. It is not unusual to have a deficit at this point in the year: at the same point in 2024, North Church had a year-to-date deficit of \$9,297. We need to have good income and contained expenses for the next four months to try to get back to a balanced budget for 2025.

As of August 31, total income is higher than budget by about \$13,000, primarily due to pledge income received so far in 2025. Total expenses are about \$22,000 higher than budget, primarily due to building expenses, including an unanticipated costly replacement of sewer pumps earlier this year.

The operating budget does not include income and expenses for the grant-funded security project. To date in 2025, North has received security project grant income of \$111,317, which includes reimbursement for project expenses in 2024. Security project expenses to date in 2025 total \$42,738.

We continue to be deeply appreciative of your financial support to the life and ministry of North Church.

Please feel free to contact any member of the Finance Committee if you have questions.

Finance Committee: Neil Arnold, Jim Atwood (Chair), Brad Hahn (Treasurer), Marcia Hunt, Tim Hutton, Mary Beth Karr (Assistant Treasurer), Dick Mesmer

Property Updates

Nonprofit Security Grant (NPSG) Update

by Joe Alber

Since the previous edition of the *North Star*, doors at the end of the two wings were built and installed and the electronic door access controls reattached. Cameras are now operating at all four entrances and can see who wants to enter the building. The doors can be remotely unlocked by someone in the church office or by any authorized person with internet access.



The sixth and last phase of the grant is the strategic placement of barriers at each of the doors to prevent someone from crashing into the building with a vehicle. Considerable time was spent researching and selecting how this will be accomplished. Once it was determined what we wanted to do, it was necessary to consult with individuals in Albany who administer the grant for FEMA and then to discuss our plan with Amherst Town officials. That process was completed two weeks ago.

The pole bollards for the wing doors were recently installed and orders have been placed for attractive concrete benches and planters for the main doors. It is hoped that installation of these items will occur before the snow flies. Right now we are anticipating

that the grant will be completed well within the required time frame and under budget.

You may have noticed when entering the building that some landscaping by volunteers is underway at the South main entrance. The landscaping is not funded by the grant, but it is necessary to begin preparing the area for the placement of the benches and planters. The emphasis will be on considerably enhancing the appearance on this side of the building, which will remain the principal entry to the building, but some lesser landscaping will also be done at the North entrance.

It is the hope of the Committee overseeing the grant that the church will find money in the spring for further improvement to the landscape on each side of the walkway into the building on the South side. Also, as previously reported it will be a wonderful enhancement to the appearance of the campus, if new plantings can be located around the sign along North Forest Road. It is a focal point for people driving past the building and helps shape their impression of the church.

Please don't hesitate to ask any of the committee members questions you may have: 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 the active participation of the congregation.

Faith Formation

Adult Ed

Beginning October 5th through November 2nd, Adult Education will be discussing the book *Fear of The Other* by William Willimon. Its copyright is 2016, but it is still very relevant in today's world.



William Henry Willimon is an American theologian, author, and retired United Methodist Church bishop. He is currently a professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry at Duke Divinity School. He served as

Dean of Duke Chapel and a professor at Duke Divinity School for 20 years before becoming the UMC Bishop of the North Alabama Conference from 2004 to 2012. He is also known for his prolific writing, with over 70 books published.

Debbie Katz presents the author as follows: "Every Christian educator learned about Willimon's approach to faith development. We read his books and learned that *'faith must be caught, not taught.'*" We learned that children, teens and even adults learned about faith by watching and being a part of an active community of faith. As a retired Methodist bishop and professor of Christian Ministry at Duke Divinity School, Willimon's interests are wide ranging and offer wisdom and depth on the topic Fear of the Other.

In the introductory remarks of the book, the author states, *"Let the politicians do what they must to be elected by the people like us, though I think they are selling us short. My job is not to worry about opinion polls, or what nine out of ten Americans can swallow without choking, or to debate national strategy. My peculiar vocation is to help the church think like Christians so that we might be given the grace to act like Jesus"*.

Please join in the discussion of this book or, if unable to join us, please read this book. We will have books to purchase through Adult Ed. Just ask Debbie Katz for a copy. Here's a link for further understanding of this topic. [Fear of the Other • Abingdon Press](#)

Join the Adult Education class and grow in your faith among friends. Such an opportunity to be in community with like-minded people should not be missed. Everyone is welcome!

Sunday School & Intergenerational Event



Sunday School has begun! We had a great time reconnecting and learning about how to love like Jesus during our first class. We also shared love by making

birthday cards for a special 90-year-old congregation member!

Our fall Sunday school dates are:

9/21/25 - we will be making yarn wrapped crosses

10/05/25 - we will be working on our next mission project

10/19/25 - mission project will continue

11/2/25 - during Sunday school we will be baking for the bake sale on 11/4/25.

11/16/25 - Sunday School followed by a really fun intergenerational event right after Sunday School (details on the event to follow)

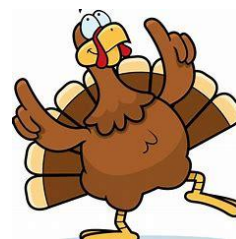
11/30/25 - first Sunday of Advent

12/14/25 - we will be making Christmas Deacon bags during class

All children pre-K 4 years old through 8th grade are welcome to join in the fun. Please contact Debbie Hutton at dsnyder97@yahoo.com or voice/text at 716-903-1053 for questions and to offer ideas or help.

Mission in Action

2025 Turkey Basket Project



We will continue our community partnership to provide Thanksgiving dinner for those in need. It is a special privilege to work together to care for others!

Our Turkey Basket Project team consists of friends and members of North Presbyterian Church, Congregation Shir Shalom, Williamsville East High School, Temple Beth Zion and the Hindu Cultural Center. Additional yearly support comes from Bureau Veritas, Amherst Presbyterian Church, Christ United Methodist Church, Girl Scout troops, and dedicated individual financial supporters each year.

Each meal contains the following:

- 1 frozen turkey (10-15 lbs. please)
- 1 box/bag stuffing mix
- 1 can cranberry sauce
- 2 cans of vegetables
- 2 cans of fruit
- 1 bag or box of potatoes
- 1 dessert (cake mix with can/pouch of frosting, or brownie mix)

Following is a schedule of activities for this year's project:

- **Friday, 11/21/25, 3 pm** Canned goods will be sorted and categorized by Williamsville East High School students and church and temple volunteers.
- **Saturday, 11/22/25, 9 am** Meals will be assembled in the church hall by volunteers.
- **Sunday, 11/23/25, 9:30 am** Area agencies who receive and distribute the food will pick up meals. (We utilize community agencies to identify community needs and distribute meals).

We will sign up for volunteer time slots and stage two separate assembly areas in the church.

Please sign up to volunteer!

- For volunteer signups, call/text Debbie Hutton at 716-903-1053.
- Questions, call/text Tim Hutton at (716) 481-4781

Calling All Bakers!

North Church family and friends! We will again host a bake sale during Election Day voting in Westminster Hall on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, starting at 6 am



until we run out of baked goods and/or volunteers to talk about our church.

The tables will contain baked goods that will be given to anyone with an opportunity to give a freewill donation to benefit the Turkey Basket Project. We will have the beautiful picture sign boards made last year by Reyne Jankowski to talk about all the great people in our church community and all the great things our church community does.

Please sign up to donate baked goods or volunteer at the table. It is requested that you individually package baked goods to make it easy for voters to grab and take with them for their day.

Please email, call, text or sign up on a signup sheet available after worship to bake or volunteer to sit at the table and talk to folks. Debbie Hutton dsnyder97@yahoo.com 716-903-1053.



by Olivia Ebsary

It's A BALANCING ACT!!

As we age, balance becomes more of a challenge and more important to our safety. Medication, injuries and weak muscles, pain, and vision changes can all impact our balance.

Good benchmarks for balancing on one foot in your 30's and 40's would be about 30 seconds, 50's-60's 20-20 seconds, 70's aiming for 10-20 seconds is reasonable, and 80-90's even 5-10 seconds on each foot is a solid goal.

Not there anymore? Or even if you are, balance exercises should be part of your activities of daily living and any fitness program. A balance **BOSU** ball (**BO**th **S**ides **U**p) and stability stick are tools you would find in a gym setting. Believe it or not they are a quick train too! Yoga and tai chi are great classes to consider. Also, just on your own, balancing on one foot and then another and walking heel-toe walks.

Using a chair or countertop will help you improve this.

Whether you are working at a gym or at home staying active at home, maintaining balance is key to staying healthy and independent. Take care of yourself “every step of the way”!

Be well, Livy



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

Classes are free, no registration!

***as schedule can vary, please email
oliviaebsary@gmail.com for up-to-date details***

This ‘n That

Youth Triennium

July 28-31, 2025

by Marcia Hunt

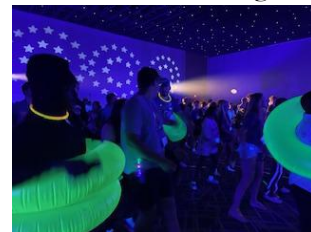


Triennium departure was 6:30 am on Monday, July 28. The choir will attest I’m always late. So I came flying in just in time, a miracle, “*As if we were Dreaming*,” the theme of the 2025 Presbyterian Youth Triennium (PYT).

Our opening service was focused on the vision of Pentecost and the impact of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The sermon, “Born to Dream,” was presented by the Rev. CeCe Armstrong, the keynote speaker and co-moderator of PCUSA. Our kids got to see CeCe at Montreat last year, so it was an extra treat to hear her preach again.



The youth lead small group discussions. The support documents tied into the scriptural themes were well written and the kids did a great job keeping everyone on track while generating good conversation. Our small group was combined with kids and leaders from Youngstown, Ohio, who we’d stopped & picked up along the way to Louisville. While we were strangers at the beginning, we weren’t by the end of the week! The Dreaming theme was woven into the evening activities, and we were off to a neon night of dancing.



Tuesday and Wednesday were our 14-hour days at the convention center. Tuesday’s theme was “Collective Dreaming”, and the sermon was presented by Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow. Collectively we hope the food is better at the next PYT. Evening DoorDash kept hungry kids fed so we collectively contributed to the Louisville economy. A few of us took a break from the convention center and walked over to the PCUSA



headquarters where Heifer Project was having a goat petting experience.



Thank you for Joseph & the Technicolor Dreamcoat or really good Sunday school but the kids hit it out of the ballpark in small group on Wednesday. The evening sermon was “Facing Nightmares” by Rev. Peggy Jean Craig, personally I think this was my favorite. She made me laugh and cry.



Thursday's theme was “Wake Up & Dream” and we closed with sermon by the Rev. Jerry Cannon. A long bus ride got us home in time to dream in our own beds.



Hope you enjoy the pictures from our trip and dream of trips you've gotten to take in your life of service to Christ.

Happy Retirement!

On Sunday, August 14, we celebrated and said goodbye to our bookkeeper, Karen Thomas, after many years of faithful service, who, along with her husband Mike, retired in September.

We wish Karen and Mike a long, well-deserved retirement!



Happy 90th Birthday!

On Sunday, September 7, we celebrated Marlene Harrington's 90th birthday. Marlene (who turned 90 on September 1) has been the organist and choir director at North Church for the past 54 years. Happy Birthday, Marlene!



FONP 2025 Silver Spoon Award

On Wednesday, September 17, representatives of our fabulous kitchen crew were on hand to accept the **FONP 2025 Silver Spoon Award** in recognition of outstanding dedication to their mission and helping individuals in need in our community. They were honored at the 15th Annual Party for the People at the Flying Bison Brewery. Congratulations!



Pictured from left to right:
Sue Boldt, Norma Henderson,
Marjorie Blakely, Harvey Blakely,
Joe Heary FONP, Bob Henderson



Pictured from left to right:
Bob Henderson, Sue Boldt, Faye Wohlhueter
Harvey Blakely, Marjorie Blakely, Norma Henderson



Henry Hutton
Senior Year, Williamsville East High School



Avery (UPK) and Carter (2nd grade)
Hochrad
Williamsville School

First Day of School!



Charlie Hutton
Junior Year, Allegheny College in Meadville PA



Jeff Faunce
36th Year of Teaching



Louise Cooper and her crew of hard-working helpers planned and executed three Weidner's chicken BBQ fundraisers over the summer to support the work and mission of North Church. Net proceeds from each were:

May	\$1,244
July	\$1,220
September	\$1,330
Total	\$3,794

We also donated 25 dinners to Compass House in May, 20 dinners to Willow Lodge at the VA in July, and 30 dinners to Little Portion Friary in September.

Many thanks to everyone's generous support of this year's events!



Looking Ahead

Mark Your Calendars

October 5 – World Communion Sunday
October 13 – Holiday – **Office Closed**
November 4 – Election Day / Bake Sale
November 16 – Intergenerational Event
November 21-23 – Turkey Basket Weekend
November 27-28 – Thanksgiving – **Office Closed**
November 30 – First Sunday in Advent
December 21 – Children's Christmas Pageant
December 24 – Christmas Eve Services, 4 & 9 pm
December 25 – Merry Christmas! – **Office Closed**

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

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