



From the Pastor

I just finished working on our Fall schedule of outreach events into our community. I'm a little nervous about it. Can we pull off the festivals, community events, and street giveaways? Am I asking too much of our members? I've been heavily involved in these events in the past and I feel overwhelmed and tired just thinking about setting up for another festival. And can we afford it? It seems that there are always surprise costs in doing the events.

All of these thoughts are swirling around me and I am reminded of how easy it would be to rest on our laurels and take a break from community work. In fact, a lot of churches don't mess with any of this stuff. **Do we really have to do this?**

And then in the back of my mind I hear the voice of Paul describing why he does what he does – "Christ's love compels me" he says. And I'm reminded of Jesus' call to love our neighbors and his challenge to die to ourselves and find life.

And something begins to stir in me. It's the thousands of faces that we've handed a cup of lemonade. It's the thousands of brochures we've handed out with a message of grace and forgiveness included. It's dozens of conversations that I and other members have had with people struggling to make sense of God and wandering if they really need what God and the Church are offering.

It's the faces of our members that are a part of this community of faith because we didn't rest. Because we showed up and proclaimed the love of God in a public space in a very unassuming way.

But also stirring in me is the desire for our church to really please God. I want to hear God say well done to me, but I also want to see one day our entire church – all of NWCC gathered in His presence. And I want to hear Him say those words to us corporately. "Well done Northwest! Well done good and faithful servants!" I want to be a part of a church whose primary purpose is to really please God.

As I read Scripture, a church that pleases God is a church that knows how to love. That knows how to love each other but also knows how to love the stranger. That knows how to be compassionate and meet people where they are.

But being a God-pleasing church involves great risk. This Summer, we will be inviting you to go out into our community and share God's love. You might be tempted to play it safe and comfortable. But, maybe God is urging you outside of your comfort zone. Maybe Christ's love is compelling you to go. And when our members take the risk, I always see the light in their eyes. They light up because they know they are making a difference and doing something exciting for God. So, as you hear the opportunities coming up, I urge you to say yes to the call of God to go. I guess I answered my question – Yes, we really do have to do this!

Martha's Table

NWCC and Martha's Table

NWCC has been in partnership with Martha's Table (MT) since 2005 assisting in distributing and serving food to clients from its mobile soup kitchen known as McKenna's Wagon. On the first Thursday of each month, from 4:45 to 6:45 pm, you will find a four-person team from our church on McKenna's Wagon serving clients at two locations in downtown Washington. (The soup kitchen operates seven days a week.) During 2011, NWCC members were part of a network of volunteers that served a total of 327,260 meals to people in need. Anyone interested in joining this effort should contact Eileen Hemphill, Team Leader. (ehemphill@starpower.net or 202-291-4124)

For more than 30 years, Martha's Table has helped at-risk children, families and individuals in our community improve their lives by providing educational programs, food, clothing and support services. MT helps 1100 people a day deal with the immediate effects of poverty and disadvantage. For more information about volunteer opportunities at Martha's Table, contact Kimberly Lyons-Briley, Volunteer Services Coordinator, at 202-328-6608, or check the website at www.marthastable.org. The organization is located at 2114 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC, in the Shaw/Columbia Heights neighborhood.

Focus on Values: Education

Each newsletter we've been spending a bit of time to focus on one of our key values at NWCC. This month we focus on the value of education and in particular the education of the children in our local community. I don't need to tell you that the public schools in our community are struggling. Here's the 2011 numbers. DC schools have a graduation rate of 58%. Our local elementary school has math and reading proficiencies of 51% and 38%. Our local middle school has proficiencies of 35% (Math) and 29% (reading). And our local high school has proficiencies of 24%(math) and 23% (reading).

We know that in our country that education tracks very closely with poverty. So, we are convinced that intervening at the education stage can have lifelong benefits. So, here are some of the ongoing projects related to education at NWCC. We currently support our local elementary school through volunteer efforts, through teacher appreciation events, and through events for the children. We host Pastor Bunny's tutoring program in our facility and allow use of our van for transportation. Many of our members have volunteered with the tutoring center.

We also have an ongoing campaign to encourage our NWCC children to do well in school and to graduate. Pastor Bunny leads a reward program for report cards. We also have a reward program that provides a laptop to any regular member who graduates from high school and goes to college. We hope you will catch the vision and help us live out this value of education. – Pastor Dan

Nursery Ministry

We are expecting 5 infants at NWCC between now and February! Although we know infants usually take a few months after birth to make it to the nursery we are planning ahead. We have expanded the space to accommodate two play pens and a changing table. We converted an adjacent shower room into a bathroom just for the nursery. And, we updated the television set so that volunteers can follow the sermon downstairs and have a venue to play ministry related DVDs. We will need more volunteers for this ministry as it goes through this growth spurt, so we hope you will be considering volunteering for it.

Volunteer Fair

In August and September, we will again be having the Volunteer Fair. During the fair each week, you'll be able to see all of the volunteer positions available at NWCC and consider how you can best serve God's Church. If you are currently serving in a ministry, it is time to begin considering if you will continue serving in the same area. There are four broad areas for you to consider with multiple opportunities within each area.

1. Outside the Walls Ministries
2. Building Disciples Ministries
3. Building Friendships Ministries
4. Behind the Scenes Ministries

Compassionate Ministry

Dear NWCC & Friends,

Praise God for His provisions for The Refuge homeless program this Saturday, as we hosted nearly 20 homeless & low-income guests for showers, toiletries & clothes, a meal, Bible study, and a general time of fellowship. We particularly saw Him moving in a big way through the study, which explored the biblical perspective of legitimate versus illegitimate shame. Please read on for a summary of our tenth event as told by Melanie Baker, a first-time volunteer:

When I first heard about and was invited to come volunteer at The Refuge, I had two main thoughts: 1) this sounds like an excellent ministry, and 2) I don't know anything about spending time with homeless men. However, I was told that many of the men enjoy a good, competitive game of spades, and that is something I do enjoy, so I agreed to come.

When I first got to the church, I wasn't exactly sure what to do. I was greeted by and introduced to the other volunteers, but I have to admit I was a little shy of the men at first. I stood around somewhat awkwardly, but then finally just started to talk. I asked one of the guys waiting for a shower how he had heard about The Refuge and if he had come before.

As he started telling me about his experience coming over the past several months, I could immediately see the positive impact this ministry has had in his life. I can't quote him word for word, but he explained how he loved coming and that this was a place where he could find some peace, have a good meal, and get a break from the often rough and tumble life of the streets. Although he didn't use the word "refuge" explicitly, that was exactly what he described this as- a refuge of comfort, friendship, and peace.

The conversation transitioned to spades, and I was introduced to Ricky, who is one of the most competitive of the players. We exchanged some friendly banter and a challenge was issued. We spent the next several hours playing games of spades, and I think it was the most fun afternoon of spades I've ever had. I just moved to DC a few weeks ago, and I had actually thought to myself, "How do I go about finding people here who want to play spades?"

Well, as small of a thing as it is, God has provided just that, and it's beautiful to me to see how He can use even the smallest interest to connect His children to one another, children who might not otherwise even recognize their brother or sister when passing on the street. I'm thankful for having had the opportunity to be introduced to this ministry and the men who came, and I'm looking forward to another afternoon of friendship and fellowship next month!

Will you step out of your comfort zone as Melanie did, and support this ministry next month? Contact Krista at kkartson@aol.com, and commit now to pray, donate, or volunteer with us.

Picnic in the Park

After a shorter worship service on September 16, NWCC will celebrate the end of summer with a church picnic in nearby Rock Creek Park. We were fortunate enough to reserve Grove 24 which is located beside the Carter Barron Amphitheatre and across from the William Fitzgerald Tennis Stadium. (Enter at 16th & Colorado Avenue or 16th & Kennedy Street, NW.) Grove 24 has a covered pavillion, restrooms, swings and other play equipment for children and the young at heart. Volunteers are needed for donations of food, beverages and supplies; set-up and clean-up services; and games/activities for children. Sign up in the lobby or contact coordinators Eileen Hemphill (ehemphill@starpower.net) or Sylvia Bowen (sbowen@nahro.org) for more information. All contributions are welcome!

Fairfax Community Church Partnership

Our church continues to engage in a very intentional partnership with Fairfax Community Church. FCC has been a part of our church's journey from the beginning, but this year we have been working towards a more meaningful relationship with the church. Pastor Dan continues to meet on a monthly basis with staff from FCC which is providing insight to streamline many of our ministry areas. Krista Kartson proposed a well received idea to FCC that would allow a group of FCC members to come over for a weekend ministry experience in the city. We are calling it "Grace in the City." Pastor Dan continues to work in concert with Pastor Rod (FCC) to develop sermon series that meet the needs of both churches. The series focus is the same but the sermons are prepared separately by each Pastor for their unique context. We will be evaluating this season of partnership at the end of the year to determine its feasibility for the future.

Prayer Ministry

With prayer we can trust God completely to work out all things for our good. Challenges will come, but God stands ready to walk with us. Philippians 4: 6 encourages us to be "anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" It actually changes the game when we choose to declare the victory before we worry about the challenges.

Our team is meeting for prayer gatherings and additional trainings. The prayer room is available before and after all services for individual, confidential prayer. We would love to stand with you in faith!

Stewardship Update

Thank you for your continued faithful giving. We saw our finances stabilize this Summer in comparison to previous years which has been very encouraging. We have been blessed by several unexpected gifts this year (including a gift from the estate of John Robinson) that have largely been placed in savings. The Advisory Council will be working towards a new budget in the coming months. As a reminder, our fiscal year now ends on December 31st.

June Stats (4 Sundays)

Attendance	Offering Total	Offering Avg
76 (avg) (+0% from 2011)	\$9,641 (-4% from 2011)	\$2,410 /wk

July Stats (5 Sundays)

Attendance	Offering Total	Offering Avg
75 (avg) (+3% from 2011)	\$10,951 (+15% from 2011)	\$2,190 /wk

Year to Date

Non-Offering	+ Offerings	= Total Income	2012 Budget	7 Mo. Budget	Expenses	Checking	Savings
\$22,356	+ \$83,491	= \$105,847.21	\$148,478	\$86,612	\$ 87,524	\$6,545	\$18,308