

## **2023: Born Over Again!**

We enter 2023  
excited about

newness. Creation! The promise of God bringing good change into our lives and communities. At the beginning of a year we grab the hope that health and joy will come into being around us. And we have good reason to hope. After all, we've just come from the birthday party of Jesus. A baby born to poor people in the middle of a barnyard. What a new and exciting, strange thing! A birth full of wonder, full of the presence of God, pointing to God's new way in our world. And so we ask ourselves, how will this year bring God's new way into my life? Or better yet, In 2023, who was I born to be?

God tells us through David in Psalm 139:

*"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...*

*Your eyes saw my unformed body;*

*All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."*

God is a Creative Being. God created each one of us. And right now, God is creating a "New Heavens and a New Earth". So how can you and I be part of all this creating work?

We participate in God's creation by being our authentic self.

After all, God created us in a specific way, to fit perfectly into everything else that God has created around us. We were wonderfully made and our days were ordained and planned out for us. But too often we get stuck in trying to be someone else. It's less risky to try to be someone that the world has already approved. But what if we were bold enough to be our created selves? A new thing in this

world. Something uniquely us. How in this year can I be uniquely me? How can I give God praise by letting God's creation, God's gifts in me, to work and flower in the world around me?

In becoming one's self, Rabbi Zusya, when he was an old man, said, "In the coming world, they will not ask me: 'Why were you not Moses?' They will ask me: 'Why were you not Zusya?'" So let's ask ourselves, how can I be who God made me to be? What are my gifts? What makes me uniquely me? This year, I will resolve to be the creation that God made me to be and I will see how this authenticity brings newness and God's creative power all around me.

Finally, Jesus told us in John 3 verses 3 and 6 that, "...no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above...What is born of the flesh is flesh, but what is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Do we accept Jesus's challenge to be born all over again? After all, God is giving rebirth to the world all around us, but will we join in? Can we "see the kingdom of God"? It depends. Are we looking to fit into God's plan through our own understanding and the way we have created ourselves: our plans, our jobs, our comforts? Or are we looking to be part of God's creation this year by being born again through the new and beautiful, through the Holy Spirit? If we're not sure, all we have to do is seek Jesus. When we seek after how real Jesus is, we tap into the Holy Spirit. When we tap into the Holy Spirit, Jesus gives us a new birth, a return to who God intended us to be.

So, Lord, give me another birth this year. Help me to be born from above. From your spirit. Help me to have a reset. A rebirth. Help me to return to the beautiful and loving and good gifts that you placed in me as a little child. Help me to seek to live in a new way. Your kingdom come, your will be done, here on earth as it is in heaven. Amen. Sincerely,

*~ Pastor Brendan*

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**Blue underlined text in the newsletter is a link to [SAFE websites/forms](#). Click and explore!**

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# The Epiphany . . .

. . . (manifestation) of the LORD - **January 1**, an even more ancient celebration among Christians than Christmas, originally focused on the nativity, incarnation, and baptism of Christ. Today we celebrate the coming of the 'three' wise men (magi), who brought gifts to the Christ child. It marks the end of the Christmas Cycle, which began the First Sunday of Advent.



# Leadership Consecration Sunday

Our thanks for all those who have faithfully and graciously served in 2022. Join us in recognizing and commissioning Norwood UMC's elected officers and ministry leaders for 2023 on **Sunday, January 8**. Please keep the attached copy of Church Council members and other elected officers. Refer to them as needed or desired to know how your church works, which ministry areas, committees or groups you belong in or serve with, and how they are related. Others may be added to this list as noted in future newsletters.





If severe winter weather makes travel to the church unsafe, services and events may be canceled or rescheduled. If the church has your email address, you will be informed of any cancellations or changes using that media. We also will use our "robo" calling system, "Dial My Calls", which will call your home/cell, again, only if we have that information. If your phone is set up to not accept calls that block their phone number, the "robo" calls will not go through.



*"I sought the Lord, and He delivered me, and delivered me from all my fears."*

*Psalm 34:4*

## Ongoing Prayer Needs:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Alex (Sally Vickers)  | Robin Kim                                    |
| Alice & Ed Sabre  | Jamie King (Lynda Stine)                     |
| All those affected by violence & war, and for peace between world governments | Carol Luther Lauria (Sally Vickers)          |
| Russell & Bethany Alexander   | Gary Leranian (Madeline Deane)               |
| Bob Arrants   | Eleanor Luther                               |
| Joe Bradford  | Janice MacBride                              |
| Brook & Natalie (Maggie McCans)   | Susan Markow (John Jones)                    |
| Jim Chambers (Sally Vickers)  | Miriam Martin                                |
| Jerry & Barbara Chreiman  | Mary (Gina Dukes)                            |
| Madeline Deane  | Liz Murray (Lynn Seidel)                     |
| Michael Fletcher (Lynn Seidel)  | Rev. Bill Neff                               |
| Sam & Dolores Getty   | Donna Riegel                                 |
| Bill & Anne Gibbs   | Sandy (Anna Glisson)                         |
| Eugene Holt (John Venafr)   | Ruth Schenkenberger                          |
| Marla Hsu (Anna Glisson)  | Sandra Shanahan                              |
| John & Terri Jones  | Bernie, Bobbie & Katie Shimkus (Laura Welch) |
| Tina Kadri (Judy Arrants)   | Michael Tate                                 |
|   | Jacob Tercha (Bobbi Blum)                    |
|   | Joan Touhill (Lynn Seidel)                   |
|   | Toya (Gina Dukes)                            |

## Current Prayer Needs:

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Becky  | Jamie King       |
| Danielle   | Ruth Pearce      |
| Ellen  | Alice & Ed Sabre |
| comfort for Bill Fisher Family in passing of Bill's father | Sydney           |
| Frank & Joyce Frustillo                                    | Mary Weah        |

## Members Residing in Retirement Care and Nursing Home Centers

Bob Nelson – Broomall Rehab & Nursing Ctr



We will have the Men's Breakfast **Saturday, January 7 at 8:00 am**. We meet once a month on the first Saturday of the month, October to June. It is a time for fellowship and to build a relationship with one another. Please join us.



## Wesley's Covenant Prayer

From John Wesley's Covenant Service, 1780

I am no longer my own, but thine.  
 Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.  
 Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
 Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,  
 exalted for thee or brought low for thee.  
 Let me be full, let me be empty.  
 Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
 I freely and heartily yield all things  
 to thy pleasure and disposal.

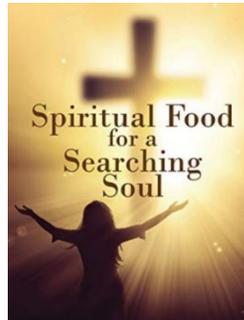
And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
 thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
 let it be ratified in heaven. Amen

### Wednesday Night Bible Study



Pastor Brendan will begin a new Bible Study class January 4 via ZOOM. If you are interested in attending this virtual class, please contact Pastor Brendan: text 267-210-5232. or email [pastorbrendan33@gmail.com](mailto:pastorbrendan33@gmail.com).



Reading material for spiritual formation and inspiration is available in the hallway outside the sanctuary. [Our Daily Bread](#) includes daily scripture readings and words of insight, usually including personal stories. Visit our website for other devotional [online inspirations](#). Donations are appreciated, but not required. Share the good news of Christ with someone this month!

	Gary Buchanan ..... 7
	Greg Buchanan ..... 7
	Dolores Getty ..... 8
	Harry Heywood ..... 10
	Joanne DiFabio ..... 12
	Carol Hammes ..... 12
	Christina Pentimall ..... 14
	Bill Fisher, Sr..... 15
	Rich Borrell..... 16
	Daniel Shanahan ..... 18
	Cindy Tuttle ..... 21
	Barbara Brooks..... 24

## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

Jesus said, *“The time has come . . . The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”* (Mark 1:15 NIV). And again, *“I have come so that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.”* (John 10:10) That includes you! To have that abundant and eternal life simply “repent” or “turn” to God and believe the good news of Jesus Christ! You can do this in your heart by asking God’s forgiveness of your sins (thoughts and actions which separate you from God’s love and holiness). Please contact Pastor Brendan for further assistance.

## Handy Hands

Do you like to knit, crochet or do other types of hand work? If so, please join us **Monday: January 9 at 1:00 pm** in the Parlor. Questions? ? Please see [Lynn Crump](#), [Randy Gibbs](#), or [Lynda Stine](#).



## Parent's Corner



### What Jesus said about children

[DiscipleLand](#)

[Staff](#) April 29, 2015 [Children Need To Know](#), [Lead a Child to Jesus](#), [Teaching Tips](#), [What Kids Need](#) [No Comments](#)

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14, NIV).

#### How Kids Think

Some people say, "Children need to grasp the Gospel's deep significance before they should be given an opportunity to respond." This thinking marginalizes the power of the Good News. As a result, those kids miss out on the privilege of receiving new life and enjoying Jesus' companionship during the difficult challenges before them.

Approximately half of the people in America who come to faith in Christ respond to the Gospel before the age of 13\*. That statistic underscores the importance of presenting the Good News to children—clearly and enthusiastically!

#### Children Can Respond to the Gospel

As soon as children become aware of personal sin, they are ripe to respond to the Good News. Even young children begin to grasp who God is, what He is like, what He has done, and what He can do. As children grow in their understanding, they realize that God is real, that the Bible is true, and that faith in God is reasonable.

By the time kids reach the age of 8-10, they develop the ability to think abstractly. By then they can personalize the concept of substitution—that Jesus took their place; He died to forgive their own sins. According to God's law, punishment for sins requires payment of blood—an innocent victim must die for the guilty party (Romans 6:23). Jesus willingly took our place and punishment. He defeated death for us. Christ's sacrifice on our behalf inaugurates a life transformation that allows believers of any age to begin a personal relationship with God (Hebrews 9:28, 10:10). This is Good News!

#### The Stone Table

As a child, I grew to love the book series C.S. Lewis wrote for children, the Chronicles of Narnia. Though I devoured all seven of the Narnia books, none was as captivating to me as *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. I knew that story inside and out. As a nine-year-old, I even had an opportunity to participate in the musical version at my church. Acting in the musical brought Aslan the lion and the Pevensie children to life!

When the White Witch interrupted the celebration of spring, she turned me into stone (I was "Squirrel #3"). Later in the story, the evil Witch bristled at the news that Aslan had joined his army near the Stone Table. Our party of squirrels, foxes, and fauns stood on one side of the stage during the epic showdown between the White Witch and Aslan.

The climax centered around Edmund Pevensie's betrayal of his siblings. Edmund had been distinctly deceived about the true identity of the White Witch. C.S. Lewis describes the scene, "You mustn't think that even now Edmund was quite so bad that he actually wanted his brother and sisters to be turned into stone. He did want Turkish Delight and to be a Prince (and later a King) and to pay Peter out for calling him a beast. As for what the Witch would do with the others, he didn't want her to be particularly nice to them...but he managed to believe, or to pretend he believed, that she wouldn't do anything very bad to them."

The White Witch reminded Aslan, "...every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have the right to kill." She had tricked Edmund, played off his weaknesses, and then condemned him as a traitor! In a private war counsel, however, Aslan and the White Witch came to a secret agreement.

Edmund had no idea that Aslan had offered himself as a sacrifice to save his life and to appease the laws of justice in the land. As the drama unfolded, I wanted to shake Edmund's character. Don't you know he's dying for you? Don't you know Aslan took your place? How can you even begin to understand how unfair that is?

Having read the story countless times, I knew what was coming—but for a "living moment" I grieved with sorrow over Aslan's undeserved punishment. As Aslan's enemies bound him with ropes, shaved his mane, and then killed him on the stone table, I felt an overwhelming sadness.

Then Aslan came back to life—and the whole room shook! Nothing could match the triumph that accompanied his glorious resurrection from the dead. Aslan had defeated the White Witch, satisfied justice, and was now ready to empower his followers to fight on! Aslan’s glory and power transformed the whole land. He “unfroze” every stone creature, including my merry party of animals. Brought back to life by the lion, I could move and live again!

Lewis’s story and my role in that musical forever illumined the wonder and awe of Jesus taking my place on the “Stone Table.”

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, NIV).

### What You Can Do

[Download FREE Good News for Kids here.](#)

- Discern your child’s spiritual condition: Is he or she ready to respond, struggling to understand, or resisting the Gospel message?
- Don’t manipulate a boy or girl to simply respond in the way you want.
- When a child responds to God’s offer of forgiveness and new life, encourage him or her to publicly profess faith in Christ to friends and family.
- When you sense the time is appropriate, present the Gospel twice:
  1. The first time through, clearly explain the Good News. You may want to use visuals, stories, or diagrams to help communicate the message.
  2. The second time, review the Gospel and offer an opportunity to respond.

“You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14-15, NIV).

\* Barna Group “Evangelism Is Most Effective Among Kids”, October 2004.



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The Women’s Breakfast is **Saturday, Dec 14 at 8:30 am**. Cost is only \$1. For reservations, please contact Sally Vickers 610-565-0924 or [jimsallyvickers@verizon.net](mailto:jimsallyvickers@verizon.net). Faith-building friendship, fun, food, and fellowship.



## Check Out Our Website!!



ALL committee meeting dates have been entered for 2023 on our [website calendar](#). Arrow over any listed event; if there is any additional information regarding the event, it will pop up on the screen. The newsletter can be found under the heading **CONNECT**, just scroll down and click **Newsletter**. If you do not have the Adobe Acrobat reader, you can download it free from their website: [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).



Dear Norwood Family,  
We would like to thank you for you most generous Christmas gift, especially with times as they are. We wish you a very happy and healthy New Year!

~ The NUMC Staff

# January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>REMOTE Office Schedule</b>  <b>Monday to Friday</b>  <b>10a to 2p</b>		<b>Church Office</b>  <b>610-532-0982</b>  <b>Please leave a voicemail and we will get back to you as soon as possible</b>			<b>Sunday in-person</b> <b>10:00a Worship</b>  <b>live-streamed on <a href="#">Facebook</a>, then posted on <a href="#">YouTube</a></b>	
<b>1</b>  <b>Holy Communion</b> 9:00a Adult SS 10:00a Worship 10:00a Children's SS	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>  7:00p Bible Study/ZOOM  7:30p N.A.	<b>5</b>  7:00p Nar- Anon	<b>6</b>  6:00p Youth Group  10:00p N.A.	<b>7</b>  8:00a Men's Breakfast
<b>8</b>  <b>Leadership Consecration Sunday Newsletter Deadline</b> 9:00a Adult SS 10:00a Worship 10:00a Children's SS	<b>9</b>  1:00a Handy Hands  7:00p SPRC mtg	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>  7:00p Bible Study/ZOOM  7:30p N.A.	<b>12</b>  7:00p Nar- Anon	<b>13</b>  6:00p Youth Group  10:00p N.A.	<b>14</b>  8:30a Women's Breakfast
<b>15</b>  <b>Trustee Nominations</b> 9:00a Adult SS 10:00a Worship 10:00a Children's SS	<b>16</b>  <b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>  7:00p Trustees mtg  7:00p Bible Study/ZOOM  7:30p N.A.	<b>19</b>  7:00p Nar- Anon	<b>20</b>  6:00p Youth Group  10:00p N.A.	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>  <b>Trustee Elections</b> 9:00a Adult SS 10:00a Worship 10:00a Children's SS	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>  7:00p Church Council mtg	<b>25</b>  7:00p Bible Study/ZOOM  7:30p N.A.	<b>26</b>  7:00p Nar- Anon	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b>  9:00a Adult SS 10:00a Worship 10:00a Children's SS	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

Visit [www.NorwoodUMC.org](http://www.NorwoodUMC.org) for church "goodies"  
and our other Norwood UMC media platforms.

# Norwood United Methodist Church

315 Chester Pike  
Norwood, PA 19074-1401

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



2023 Newsletter

## Staff

[Brendan Van Gorder](#), Pastor

[Mike Nelson](#), Youth Pastor

[Pat Beckett](#), Administrative Assistant

[Kurt Schaefer, Sr.](#), Treasurer

[Lynda Stine](#), Financial Secretary

## Worship

10:00 am in-person Worship,  
and live-streamed on Facebook

## Contact Info

Norwood UMC / 610-532-0982  
315 Chester Pike, Norwood, PA 19074-1401



[Eastern PA Conference of the  
United Methodist Church](#)