

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

NORTH PARK CHURCH | FALL 2025 | VOL 202





PASTOR'S LETTER

BY DAVID O'LEARY, SENIOR PASTOR

Praise God for his faithfulness! Back in the Spring, we began talking about our plans for an outreach event focused on People and the Gospel. We asked you to pray for all the planning and execution of that event, for the people who come and for our interaction with them, for whom you might invite to the Summer Celebration, and that God would raise up the team of volunteers that we needed to pull this off.

We have seen God carry us through this entire process. Our Summer Celebration in July was exciting! I saw many in the NPC family rally together to pray, plan, serve, and to love.

We had **OVER 200 PEOPLE** come to the event, many of whom were from outside of NPC. I'm grateful for the many conversations I had with some of your friends that you invited, a handful that knew about our church through VBS and other ministries, as well as a number of people who did not have any other connection to NPC except that they found out about the event. If you came, you know that there were many new faces.

One of my main goals for this gathering was that people who came would know that we are like them and that we care for them. I think that was made clear.

Here's my challenge to us as a church. Pray for the people you remember meeting. You may not recall all the new names. Don't worry, God knows. Pray especially for the people God has put in your life, whether or not they came. The Summer Celebration was about creating an opportunity to invite unbelieving family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers to experience the NPC family in a nonthreatening, enjoyable environment in which the gospel was made known.

God's work in their lives does not begin and end with this event. For those who came, know that this was one more experience God is using in their life. For those who couldn't come, know that even your invitation was an expression of love for them, which God will use.

Our greatest impact flowing from this event will be through your continued, grace-filled witness toward your friends, family, and neighbors. As God is at work in you, you can be certain that he is at work through you.

Thank you to all who were involved in the Summer Celebration. And Praise God for his work at NPC.

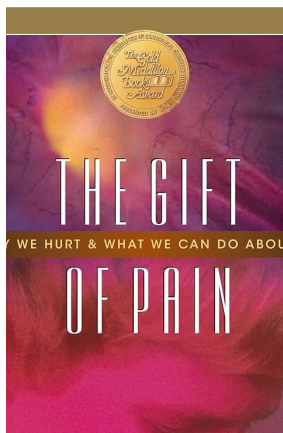
HISTORY CORNER

Dr. Paul Brand worked with lepers in India and developed many reconstructive surgical procedures to improve their lives. Most people believed that lepers lost their fingers and toes because of decaying flesh. However, Dr. Brand's research proved that lepers' malformations were tied to their loss of ability to feel pain. He called his discovery "the gift of pain". He found that the disease numbed the sensation of pain in parts of the body to the point where leprosy patients were actually injuring themselves, through their insensitivity.

Pleasure and pain are not opposite, but rather mutually dependent parts of the richest experiences of life. Often, the greatest pleasures come after great sacrifice, including considerable pain.

Romans 8:18—For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

— **Paul Brand** (1914-2003) *The Gift of Pain*



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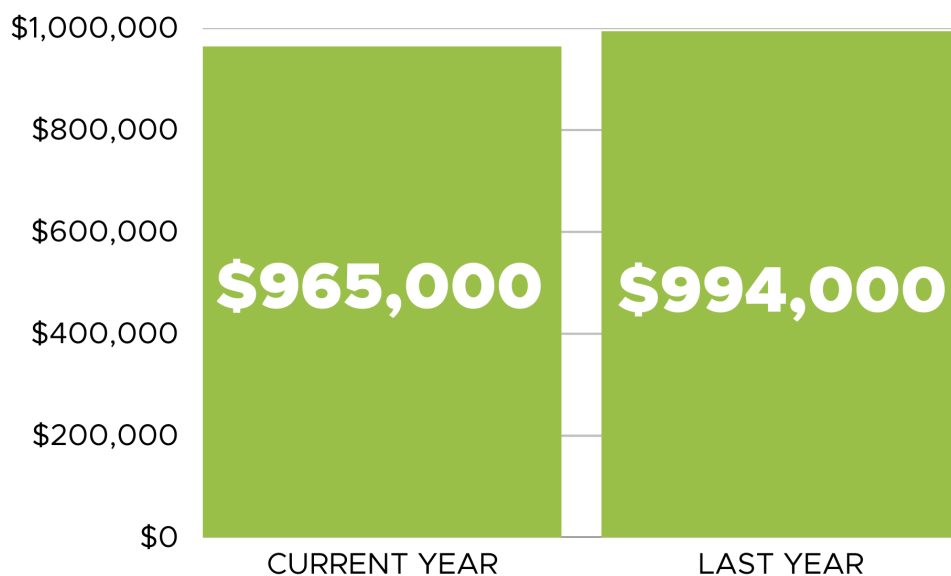
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Learn more on our Events Page
www.northparkepc.org/events

GIVING THROUGH 7/31/25

FINANCE UPDATE



Unified Giving of \$965,000 through our first 11 months of our church year was 3% less than last year.

MARRIAGE CONFERENCE

THANK GOD FOR STRENGTHENING MARRIAGES IN NPC FAMILY!

NOVEMBER 7-9, 2025

Yinz are invited to FamilyLife's "Weekend To Remember" getaway at the Marriott North in Cranberry Township, November 7th-9th. Dave and Ann Wilson, co-hosts of FamilyLife's "FamilyLife Today" radio and podcast programs and authors of the book and video series "Vertical Marriage" will be there, as well as Tony and Lymari Navaro! Already, 200 folks have registered, so we encourage couples to register as soon as they can.

We expect the ballroom to fill completely for the event, especially with our special speaker teams scheduled to come. However, there is a special **BOGO special going on from August 25 through September 15**, when couples can register for half off the regular rate! The special registration rate then is only \$175/couple instead of \$350/couple. You can simply **go to WeekendToRemember.com to register**, starting on Monday the 25th.

Even after these special dates, couples can still **receive a \$100/couple discount by simply using your church's group name of NorthParKEPC**. We ask couples to use the group name anytime they register to come, for if 5 couples come under that group name, the church can receive a free couple's registration to give away!

If couples desire to stay at the Marriott North, we also encourage them to book the rooms early for the same reason. The couples should call the Marriott North directly to receive their discounted rate of \$140 + tax/night and a free delicious buffet breakfast each morning. They should mention to the Marriott staff when they call that they will be attending the "Weekend To Remember".

On Sunday, September 14, Tim Tucker, Director of Pittsburgh's "Weekend To Remember" is scheduled to be with us to share more at North Park Church. Please invest some precious time into your God-given spouse and marriage!

Couples from North Park Church have been greatly blessed by FamilyLife's marriage conference over the years in Cranberry Township. Here are some of their comments:

"When you spend an entire weekend with your spouse, without outside distractions, you remember and appreciate how important is your marriage and how you (wrongly) put other less important things ahead of that relationship."

– **Jim Warmbrodt** • "Loved the Weekend To Remember. I would suggest to everyone to go." – **Denise Weimann**

• "We attended several years ago and the conference is still having a positive impact. The speakers were very engaging and entertaining, the atmosphere enjoyable, and it was not intimidating or uncomfortable in any way. They have you work through a simple and gentle process (that you would not typically initiate on your own) of knowing your spouse better

and working to grow closer. Skeptical husband convinced!"

– **David Pinkerton** • "We were blessed to attend FamilyLife's Marriage Conference after already being married many years. It was so refreshing to relearn things about my best friend and reimagine what we wanted our life forward to look like! We're still using tools learned there today! It was definitely worth the time and effort!" – **Kelly Laird**

• "Hands-down, best conference I have attended. Focused time with my wife and God is special, and this carves out time for it. World-class married speakers make it a Weekend to Remember." – **Mark Sharpnack**

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

— Kelly Laird

KIDS' WORSHIP

Kids' Worship classes are studying various books of the Bible this Fall, from Genesis to I & II Chronicles to I & II Samuel to John! Our curriculum, Explore the Bible from Lifeway, spans three years and covers the whole of God's Word! Our kids are being taught by rotating teams in four classes this term. Most volunteers in Kids' Worship serve once every four or five weeks, and each leader has a teen helper! What a blessing to share the wealth of teaching God's Word to our little ones!

TYKES — Our 2 & 3-year-olds in the Nursery get a Bible story and prayer time each week

PRESCHOOL — Our Preschoolers meet in Room 206 and learn from their leaders

YOUNGER — 1st & 2nd graders meet in Room 207 to learn the same lesson on a different level

OLDER — 3rd-5th graders meet on the third Sunday of each month in Room 208 to study the same lesson.

Most families desire to teach their kids how to participate in the worship service, so we only have a class for these kids on their level once a month.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will kick off again on September 7th and run every Sunday morning during the 9:00 hour through May. We use a curriculum from Faith Alive! called Dwell. Dwell is a reformed Biblical perspective that we've been using for a number of years now. Our kids are divided into four classes.

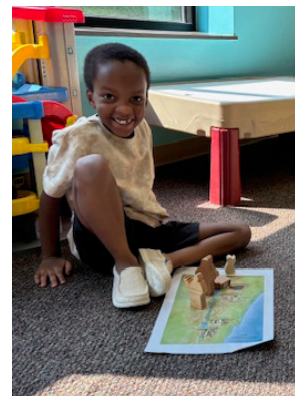
PRESCHOOL — 3-5-year-olds — Room 206 — Mrs. Meg Stimpson

KINDERGARTEN & 1ST GRADE — Room 205 — TBD

2ND & 3RD GRADES — Room 302 — Ms. Susan Burke

4TH & 5TH GRADES — Room 301 — Mrs. Laura Daly & Mr. Mike Stitt

All families who have registered their child should have received a personal letter describing our policies and practices as well as what class their child(ren) will be in this Fall. As always, if you have any questions, please contact our Director of Children's Ministry, Kelly Laird. Recently, some of our kids got to play with wooden figures and use maps to act out people following Jesus. They had fun!



VBS

Wonder Junction VBS was a success! This year, we had **111 CAMPERS** and **OVER 135 VOLUNTEERS**, not even including all of ya'll who prayed for the campers, volunteers, families, and camp! Highlights include meeting a real, live horse, getting doused by the Ingomar Fire Truck, and getting very muddy on Water Day! Kids and adults were drawn closer to the Lord through outstanding music played by our VBS Band, Bible stories taught in a fun way, interesting Science experiments, challenging crafts and games, and lots of new friendships. Enjoy some pictures from this year's event!

HOPKINS

DUNCAN & NATALIE

by Jim Ludwig

On May 3, 2025, Natalie Carey and Duncan Hopkins were married in a small private family wedding in a barn at Knob Hill Community Park. They went on a fantastic 2 ½ week honeymoon to Scotland, Greece, and a bit of London.

Natalie is happy in her job as a Medical Assistant for Orthopedic Doctors in Wexford. Duncan is growing his newly formed LLC, D.H. Improvements. You all have seen their smiling faces with the worship team at NPC since February of 2024. Let me fill in "the rest of the story," and you decide if God had a hand in their lives or if it was random luck.

Natalie grew up in the Shaler/North Hills area with an older brother and sister. Her parents, Damion and Megan Carey, raised the family Catholic. Their search for a deeper faith brought them to Glenshaw Alliance, where Bob Arnold led a vibrant youth group called Blaze.

Natalie was an outstanding student graduating in the top 16 of her high school class. She took college prep courses, including four AP courses. She excelled in choir and theater and was president of the choir group her senior year. Of course, she had parts in all the musicals, including playing Belle in "The Beauty and the Beast."

Meanwhile, Duncan is growing up in Ohio with seven brothers and sisters, all homeschooled mostly by his remarkable mom, Gayla. Brooke, his dad, was a worship director, and the whole family naturally grew up thanking God for His saving grace.

Brooke introduced Duncan to hunting and fishing, the love of building and fixing things, and the appreciation of music and singing. He was part of a diverse boys' choir on the east side of Cleveland, directed by Brooke.

Natalie and Duncan were hundreds of miles apart, with vastly different interests and skills, and were four years apart in age. How would God move? Natalie remembers listening to a "Cross talk" at a junior high fall retreat and having a weight lifted from her as she surrendered her life to God. One of her favorite scriptures she learned at a young age was Proverbs 3:5-6.

North Park Church hired a new worship director from Ohio named Brooke Hopkins, and his 14-year-old son, Duncan, was part of the move. When Glenshaw Alliance closed its doors, Bob Arnold would find his way over to North Park Church, and families like the Careys followed.



Duncan was expected to be part of the youth group at NPC, but he was also busy working. His first few summers in Pittsburgh, he picked vegetables for Freedom Farms, and in the winter, he labored mucking horse stalls. He started working for Chick-fil-A in Cranberry when he was 15, and by the time he was 19 or 20, he became the manager. Interestingly, Natalie's parents met as workers at the Chick-fil-A in Ross Park Mall decades earlier.

While working full-time, he was taking classes at Butler Community College. Seeking a change, he moved to Montana, where his sister Ruby and his mom's brother lived. There he learned the trades. He worked with three companies and got a real education (custom carpentry, HVAC, plumbing, renovations, and house flipping).

Meanwhile, Natalie went to the University of South Carolina to get a degree in exercise science in 3 years. She interned as a Medical Assistant, a Physical Therapist aide, and a lifeguard. Natalie wanted to control every aspect of her life and career. Circumstances brought her struggles and anxiety, but God wanted to teach her patience. Natalie decided to move back home to Pittsburgh and live with her parents while working and saving up money so she could go to school again to become a Physician Assistant.

At the same time, Duncan had gone through his adolescent "prodigal son" events and was clinging to 1 John 1:9. He had known God all his life but realized that he is certainly not without sin and is in need of purification. He decided to return to Pittsburgh at about the same time.

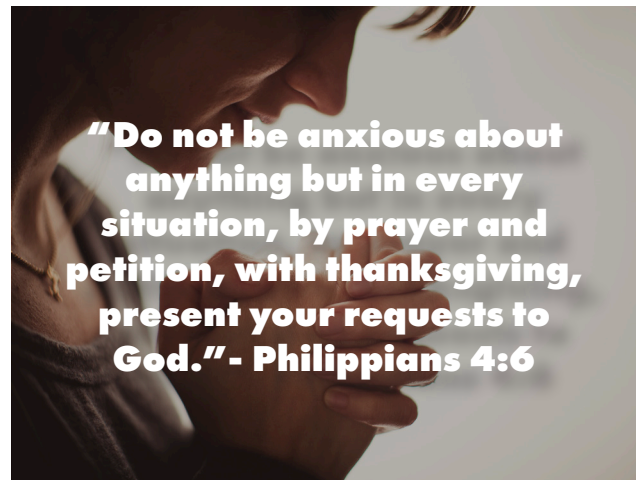
Before moving back home, they were barely on each other's radar screens. Natalie was friends with Duncan's sister, Tirzah, during the youth group years at NPC. They had spoken to each other when they were

both back for a Christmas Eve service.

They had even done some direct messaging, but it was about four years since they had spoken to each other, and one year after they both moved back, when Duncan asked Natalie out on a double date to Ohio Pyle. She said no! At the time, she didn't give him a reason, but she told me it was because she didn't think it was the best way to get time to talk together.

Almost a year later, with some encouragement from his father, he asked her out to dinner in Lawrenceville, and they talked so long they were asked to leave at closing time.

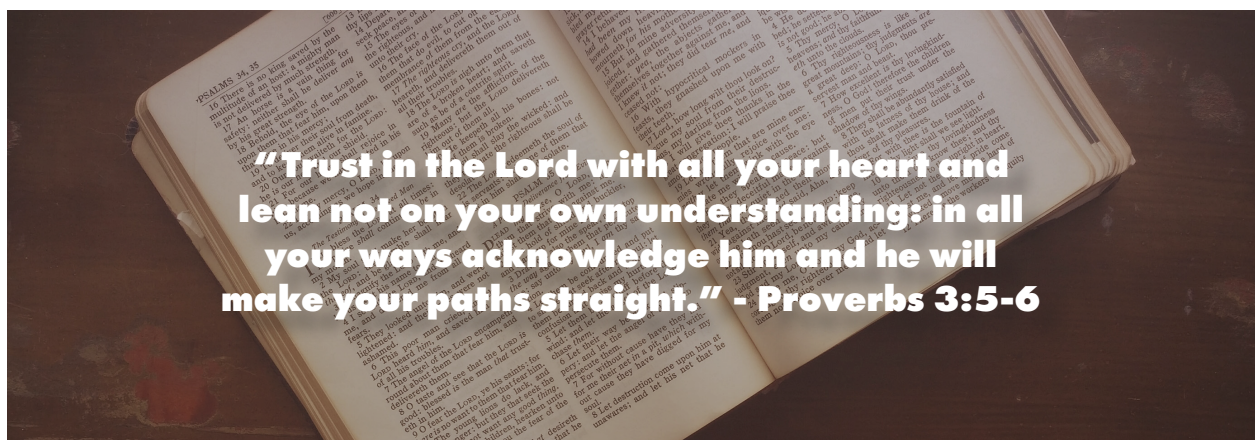
Natalie and Duncan would date for another year and then have another year of engagement before marriage. Dan and Beth Hendley and Dan and Carol Dupee counseled the couple who had fallen in love, and they began to see how God had prepared each of them in their own relationship with Christ.



"Do not be anxious about anything but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." - Philippians 4:6

They knew what didn't work from past failed relationships, and their desired futures fit. It was obvious how God had orchestrated everything in His time. They are thankful now for even the tough times God used in his preparation plan. Their prayer is to be faithful and patient, but ready to follow however God will lead them to further His kingdom.

Seek them out and ask Natalie about her passion for reading and watching crime documentaries. Ask Duncan about his motorcycle or why he enjoys listening to birds and dabbling in oil paints, acrylics, and watercolors.



"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight." - Proverbs 3:5-6

STUDENT MINISTRY

— Kelly Laird

LEADERSHIP TEAM

God has raised up a new Student Ministry Leadership Team! When you see them around the church, please greet our team and thank them for stepping up into this new role and new season!



Top Left to Right: David Pinkerton, Andy Stites, Alex Treser, Noah Asche, Caleb Stites; **Bottom Left to Right:** Susann Pinkerton, Lauren Fowler, Nancy Van Sickle, Kelly O'Leary, Kim Mycyk



**READ ALONG WITH US AS
WE READ THE BOOK OF PSALM.**

Schedule • Questions • Devotions

www.northparkepc.org/reading-plan



THANK YOU MARK

**SEPTEMBER 27
1:00-4:00 P.M.
BLUE ROOM**

We're honoring Mark Sharpnack's 39 years of service to North Park Church. He's worn many hats, including those of elder, finance manager, Stephen's Ministry Leader, Deacon coordinator, building and grounds director, and various other ministries. Mark and Rachel will be retiring and moving to North Carolina this fall to be near their son Adam's family.



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Making disciples of Jesus who WORSHIP God passionately, CONNECT with each other in caring community, & IMPACT the world through word and deed.