



A House of Prayer
for All Nations

The Ram's Horn

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THE SHEPHERD'S CORNER

The Seven Biblical Pillars of Northgate Community Church

By Pastor Dan Switzer, Ed.D.

I recall a number of years ago when the elders went away for a retreat. During that time we prayerfully sought the Lord for His guidance regarding what have become known as the Seven Biblical Pillars of our church. These values have served as a lighthouse to our congregation over the years because they protect us and help us to understand how we are to walk together as a church family.

Taught in the Gateway Class for new church family members, these pillars are foundations of our faith that speak to our core values as a congregation. It's important that we review these periodically as a church family to refresh ourselves regarding how we are to walk together. As we begin the New Year, let me share these pillars with you.

The Whole Counsel of God's Word

We believe in walking according to the Whole Counsel of God's Word. We teach, preach, and live with the Word of God as our faithful guide in all matters of life and godliness. Acts 20:27 says, "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God" (NKJV). We share with the balanced wisdom of the entirety of Scriptures as opposed to emphasizing a certain theme of Scripture to the neglect of other needful areas. For instance, although we believe in faith-filled living and experiencing the benefits of the life of Christ, we don't emphasize the popular message of faith and prosperity (A "name it and claim it" message) to the neglect of other messages such as discipleship and putting God's Word into practice. We preach the "meat" of the Scriptures, taking into account all of God's Word, as we encourage one another to build our house upon the rock.

Related to this value is the fact that we are an apostolic mission-focused people. This means that we are committed to Christ's great cause to make disciples of

Walking Together as Family

all nations. We seek to equip servant leaders for the advancement of God's Kingdom. As a community, we walk out what it means to be the New Testament Church.

A House of Prayer for all Nations

God said in Isaiah 56:7: "For my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (NIV). We have embraced God's ultimate vision for His Church—to be a house of prayer for all nations—streams of nations coming together to worship Christ as one. At the same time, this pillar focuses on the fact that we are a House of Prayer. Prayer has everything to do with our communication with God and worshipping God, both individually and corporately as a congregation.

This pillar relates to the fact that we are a body-life church. 1 Peter 2 speaks of our being a "royal priesthood." In other words, we believe that all believers are called to be priests—to be involved in ministering the life of Christ. We believe that each of us has a role to play in Christ's body—to serve the Lord and to serve one another in God-given motivation and gifting. As we serve, we grow.

On Sunday mornings, it's not just the pastors who are ministering. It is all of you—through our praise, sharing prophetic scriptures and exhortations, sharing the Lord's Table, testifying of the Lord's work, fellowshiping with one another, and in all of the various ways that we serve the Lord and encourage one another. Dependent on Christ for His life in the Body, we all seek to be sensitive to the Lord and what He is doing in our midst.

The Gospel of Grace through Faith

The third pillar is the Gospel of Grace through Faith. In Acts 20:24, the Apostle Paul speaks of the "gospel of God's grace" (NIV). Jesus would call people to follow Him by exclaiming, "Behold! The Kingdom of God is at hand!" The gospel of grace through faith is a very positive message—it literally is "Good News." When we share with people about Christ and invite them to church, we do so in a way that communicates this message—that this is Good News, that God's Kingdom coming into your life can bring positive change to you, to your marriage, to your family, to your work, indeed to every area of your life! When God's grace comes into people's lives, it changes them—it enables them to get their focus off themselves and their failures, and onto God and His destiny for their lives. As Ephesians 2:8-10 tells us, we've been saved by grace through faith—nothing from ourselves to boast about—and we are God's workmanship with a great destiny, all by His grace!

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*Lighting the Advent Wreath
David, Jennie & Joshua Lyman*

News from the Nations

Branch Ministries, Botswana, Rob and Mary Grindley – We'd like to share a couple recent testimonies: A twenty-one year old girl was freed from a demon that had been tormenting her since she was a little girl. It was really bad during junior high as she would find herself at night going to the caves in the village where a witch doctor would meet her. She would often collapse and hear voices. This caused her to fail in school. The witchdoctor told her she must become one of them, but Jesus has set her free. When the demon was cast out she said, "I saw a dark shadow leave me and then the light came inside." She is now Spirit-filled, and she has stopped hearing voices and the seizures have stopped.

Two young men, both thieves and thugs, were saved in the last two weeks. One, a Rastafarian, has shaved off his dreadlocks and is being disciplined daily. On Sunday he will be water baptized and is bringing all his rasta items to be burned on Friday. Praise the Lord!

Young Life, Montgomery

County – You might call it a cold metal moment. When Marcus felt the cold metal of a handgun pressed into his chest, he was compelled to make a choice. Would he hand over his merchandise and money to the man in the hooded sweatshirt? And – if he lived – would he finally leave his life of dealing drugs behind? Marcus chose wisely. He surrendered his merchandise and money, and moments later he texted a Young Life leader asking if it was too late for him to go to camp. Kurt, the Young Life leader, couldn't believe the question. For nine months Kurt had been strategically placing himself in the path between Marcus and the weight room twice a week after school. Eventually Kurt began inviting Marcus to Young Life club, but Marcus never made it. So when Kurt got the text from Marcus asking

about camp, he had to rub his eyes. On the fourth day of Young Life camp, Marcus asked Kurt to help him pray and surrender himself to the Savior. Thank you for giving countless kids like Marcus the chance to choose life in Jesus Christ.

Revive Israel, Tikkun, Asher & Betty

Intrater – As we have just celebrated the Feast of Dedication, we want to express our love and appreciation for your gift to the ministry. We pray and ask God to set you apart by His grace and light up your life with the all-consuming Presence of His glory. We also pray that you will experience much joy and have many opportunities to share your faith.

Living Grace Christian School –

We are focusing this month on Christ's beatitude of being merciful. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." Please pray that the students will grow in this character quality as they continue to grow into the full stature of Christ.

Shady Grove Pregnancy Center,

Rockville, MD – We make it a point to be available to those less fortunate who find themselves burdened and weary, scared and confused over what to do about their pregnancies. We offer a safe place for women to come and find hope—hope to carry through with their pregnancies. Your gift helps us to remain open and available to women who would otherwise turn to an abortion clinic for their solution. Together we make a difference— one pregnant woman at a time.

Living Grace Ministries, Thurlow

and Lynda Switzer – As we begin this New Year we sincerely thank you for your prayers and support to LGM. We will be ministering at the Iranian Afghan Christian Fellowship on New Year's Day evening. We are beginning preparations for the *Leaders Convocation* on Feb 23-25 and for the African mission trip in March.

Pray Also for:

Wycliffe Bible Translators, Matt and Rosemary Ulrich, Paraguay

Crossroads Valley Chapel, Fred., MD

Or Ha Olam, Light of the World Congregation, Rockville, MD, with Pastor Marty & Chieko Peltz

Adwoa Yeboah-Marfo, Marfo Children's Village, Ghana

D. Oliver – Northern Asia, Orphan Outreach

Jesus Is Alive Ministries, Apostle William Tetey, Lome, Togo

Stanley and Karen Redwood, Jamaica



*New Congregants Welcomed into the
Northgate Family!*

A New Year's Blessing

May God make your year a happy one!
Not by shielding you from all sorrow and pain,
But by strengthening you to bear it as it comes;
Not by making your path easy,
But by making you sturdy to travel any path;
Not by taking hardships from you,
But by taking fear from your heart;
Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;
Not by making your life always pleasant,
But by showing you when people and their causes need you most,
And by making you anxious to be there to help.
God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead!

Author unknown

Monthly Flock Group for Young

Adults (post high school to age 35) will meet on the 2nd Friday of this month at 7:30 pm, January 13th. Tim and Deborah Switzer are the leaders of this monthly Flock Group that meets in their home, 11015 Haney Terrace in Damascus, MD 20872.

Jesus, show us what we must leave behind to follow you; show us what talents and tools to use in sharing your good news with others. Help us to recognize your voice and respond, "Your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9, NRSV).

"God doesn't need us to shout. We can whisper and He still hears our prayers."

Submitted by Betty Money

Northgate Community Church

Reaching People from All Nations for Christ!

Worship Schedule

Sundays, 9:45 am - Congregational Prayer
Sundays, 10:00 am – Worship Service
Midweek Flock Home Groups
*We are always ready to serve you –
Pastors Dan, Rick, Thurlow,
and Elders Vance and Devroy*

FLOCK HOME GROUPS

Montgomery Village

Wednesdays, 7:30 pm, McRory Area; Alfred and Jacky Johnson, 301-977-2220; Assistant leader – Claude Johnson

Montgomery Village

Wednesdays, 7:30 pm, Shawn & Mindy Swander, 240-631-0322; Assistant Leaders Tim & Deborah Switzer and Ron & Kahlia Davis

Germantown

Thursdays, 7:30 pm, Rick & Sue Brown, 301-972-2129

Germantown

Wednesdays, 7:30 pm, Thurlow & Lynda Switzer, at Betty Money's, 301-540-7293

Rockville/Silver Spring

Wednesdays, 7:30 pm, Devroy & Ruth McFarlane, 240-242-4242

Ladies Flock Group with a Purpose of Praying for God's Work in the Church
Fridays, 7:30 pm, at the church; Gwen Degraffinreid and Wilhelmina Woode

Young Adult Flock Group

Meeting monthly on the 2nd Friday, 7:30 pm, at Tim & Deborah Switzer's home

Middle School Discipleship Club

For all 6th – 9th graders, on January 20th, Dan and Silvia Switzer, 301-977-1121, Assistant leaders Ron and Kahlia Davis

Men Under God (MUG) will have their next breakfast in February.

Sisters of Faith Breakfast will meet on Saturday, January 21st, 8:30 am, at Bob Evans in the Milestone shopping area.

January Birthdays

Yesunyo Godwin Johnson – Jan 5

Dave Dirksen – Jan 7

Sequoia K'ah'al Parr – Jan 8

Jose Diaz – Jan 9

Buno Alabi – Jan 12

Rachel Parr – Jan 12

Madeline Cooksey – Jan 13

Delonte Vaughn – Jan 19

Cheyenne Shifflett – Jan 21

Belinda Scangarelli – Jan 27

Jacky Johnson – Jan 28

January Anniversaries

Isaac & Wilhelmina Woode – Jan 18

David & Jennie Lyman – Jan 22

Praise and Prayer Requests

1. Pray for continuing grace and healing to Gwen Degraffinreid and wisdom for her attorneys

2. Madeline Cooksey – continuing physical therapy at the Jewish Center in Rockville

3. Valerie Oliver – praise for healing

4. Ogo-Oluwa Alabi diagnosed with galactosemia; pray for her healing

5. Lourdes Reynolds's niece's baby Richard, microcephaly -- his life will be a testimony of God's love and power to the glory of Jesus.

6. Karen O'Connor's friend, Michael – healing from a work-related fall off a ladder

7. Pray for our nation's leaders

8. Northgate pastors, elders, and families

9. Pray for those in the Northgate family who are looking for work that God will open doors for them

10. Praise God for one in the Northgate family who just accepted a new job

11. David Szymanski in AZ – prayer for health and protection

Check out this blog spot: Living Grace Ministries and leaders in friendship with LGM, under the editorship of Pastor Jon Switzer of Crossroads Valley Chapel in Frederick, MD, set up this blog spot: www.logsfortheire.blogspot.com.

The Women's Passionate and Powerful Prayer Flock Group

Meets every Friday night at Northgate, 7:30 pm

Mission: Praying for God's Work in the Church

Vision: We are intercessory shepherdesses, called to work together with Christ, saturated in the spirit of grace and prayer, while seated with Him in heavenly places, boldly contending, declaring, decreeing and anticipating, under God's delegated authority, that His perfect will is manifested and done in the earth as it is in heaven.

January 27th Special Focus Meeting – Baptism of the Holy Spirit.



OF THE RIGHTEOUS IS POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE.

James 5:16, NRSV

God's Grace

(Linda Kauzlarich sent the following story.)

There once was a man named George Thomas, preacher in a small Texas town. One Sunday morning he came to church carrying a rusty, bent, old bird cage and set it by the pulpit. Eye brows were raised and, as if in response, the Preacher began to speak . . .

"I was walking through town yesterday when I saw a young boy coming toward me swinging this bird cage. In the bottom of the cage were three little wild birds shivering with cold and fright. I stopped the lad and asked, "What do you have there, son?"

"Just some old birds," came the reply.

"What are you going to do with them?" I asked

"Take 'em home and have fun with 'em," he answered. "I'm gonna tease 'em and pull out their feathers to make 'em fight. I'm gonna have a real good time."

"But you'll get tired of those birds sooner or later. What will you do then?"

"Oh I got some cats," said the little boy. "They like birds. I'll take 'em to them."

The preacher was silent for a moment. "How much do you want for those birds, son?"

"Huh??!!! Why, you don't want them birds, mister. They're just plain old field birds. They don't sing. They ain't even pretty!"

"How much?" the preacher asked again.

The boy sized up the preacher as if he were crazy and said, "\$10.00?"

The preacher reached in his pocket and took out a ten dollar bill. He placed it in the boy's hand. In a flash, the boy was gone. The preacher picked up the cage and gently carried it to the end of the alley where there was a tree and a grassy spot. Setting the cage down, he opened the door, and by softly tapping the bars persuaded the birds out, setting them free. Well, that explained the empty bird cage on the pulpit, and then the preacher began to tell this story:

One day Satan and Jesus were having a conversation. Satan had just come from the Garden of Eden and was gloating and boasting. "Yes sir, I just caught a world full of people down there. Set me a trap; used bait I knew they couldn't resist. Got 'em all!"

"What are you going to do with them?" Jesus asked.

Satan replied, "Oh, I'm gonna have fun! I'm gonna teach them how to marry and divorce each other, how to hate and abuse each other, how to drink and smoke and curse. I'm gonna teach them how to invent guns and bombs and kill each other. I'm really gonna have fun!"

"And what will do you when you are done with them?" Jesus asked . . .

"Oh, I'll kill 'em," Satan glared proudly.

"How much do you want for them?" Jesus asked.

"Oh, you don't want those people. They ain't no good. Why, you'll take them and they'll just hate you. They'll spit on you, curse you and kill you. You don't want those people!!"

"How much?" Jesus asked again.

Satan looked at Jesus and sneered, "All your blood, tears and your life."

Jesus said, "DONE!" Then He paid the price.

The preacher picked up the cage and walked from the pulpit.

What are you going to do with Jesus?



Thank You to Northgate's Faithful Nursery Team led by Gina Parr!

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The Bond of Peace - Ephesians 4:3 says, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." How do we walk in unity? We are able to do so through "the bond of peace," our fourth pillar. Whenever we have to "work something out" among one another, we seek to do so in a peaceful manner. Without harmful infighting, we talk with one another and reason together in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. At Northgate, we don't "sweep things under the rug," so to speak; on the contrary, we talk heart to heart with one another in love and listen to and receive one another when a fellow brother or sister has a concern. Psalm 133 beautifully illustrates the spiritual dynamic of walking in peace and unity, resulting in blessing and life forevermore—and ultimately resulting in God's anointing: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore." It is this flow of the life of Christ that we seek at Northgate.

The Imitation of Christ - Related to the teacher motivation, the fifth pillar is the Imitation of Christ. The Christian walk is a life of CHANGE—we are continually being changed to be more like Christ. The imitation of Christ is the motivation that we have in being disciples of Christ and in discipling one another after Christ. Ephesians 5:1-2 says, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Matthew 11:28-30 calls us to come to Christ and learn of Him—learn of his gentleness and humility, his heart and character. How do we make disciples of Christ? We believe that relational discipleship is most effective. In the context of the Flock Home Group, we seek to build relationships in which discipleship flourishes. We all are called to make disciples through taking younger believers "under our wing" and sharing with them about what it means to follow Christ. We are continually being changed in every way to be more like Christ.

The Calling of Servanthood - I like to call this one the "Greatness of Serving Others." Jesus defined true greatness as serving others. In Matthew 20:24-28 when the disciples got into an argument over who was great, Jesus called them together and instructed them that they were not to be like those who "lord" it over others but that they were to serve one another. He said, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave." We are all called to serve, and true greatness is serving others.

The Perfection of Love - At the heart of any truly Christian congregation is the reality of God's love. The Bible says of Christians, "See how they love one another." One of the hallmarks of Northgate is our love for one another—it is very evident in the life of the Body. 1 John 4:16-19 says, "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us."

I hope this discussion of our Seven Biblical Pillars has been helpful. I want you to know that we love you at Northgate Community Church. In this family of God, you don't have to worry about impressing the leadership. Rather, you can allow Christ to change you by His grace as we grow together in body-life teamwork and as disciples of Christ. As a house of prayer for all nations, we are a true family. It is a privilege to walk with you!

January

1 Worship 10 am	2	3	4 Flock Group Leaders Equipping Mtng. 7:30 pm	5	6 <i>Epiphany</i>	7
8 Worship 10 am	9	10	11 Flock Groups 7:30 pm	12	13 Young Adult Flock Group @ T & D Switzer's 7:30 pm	14
15 Worship, 10 am <i>Congregational Meeting after church</i>	16 <i>Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday</i>	17	18 Flock Groups 7:30 pm	19	20 Middle School Discipleship Club 7:30 pm	21 Sisters of Faith Breakfast at Bob Evans 8:30 am
22 Worship 10 am	23	24	25 Flock Groups 7:30 pm	26	27	28
29 Worship 10 am	30	31				

Northgate Community Church - Reaching People from All Nations for Christ!