

A Brief History of Northwood Presbyterian Church

The Beginning

In September 2008 Northwood Presbyterian Church celebrated its fifty year anniversary. The first service of worship was held on September 21, 1958. Later that year it was formally organized by a commission from the Presbytery at a meeting held at the Sligo Community Center.

Two major policy decisions were made in the first few weeks of Northwood's life, when the Session accepted as a fundamental policy that considerations of race, color, or ethnic background would never be a part of the membership requirements.

Music was very important at Northwood from the beginning. The Chancel Choir was organized in 1959 and the following year a Junior Choir made its first public appearance at worship services.

Building

The present building was constructed and formally dedicated on October 30, 1960. The need for more space grew as the young church grew. A special drive for a new building fund was made in early 1964 and the new educational building was first used for church school classes in the fall of that year.

Northwood church rendered a service to the community by providing a meeting place for various groups. This is a service that continues today with many outside groups meeting at various times at the church.

In addition, as one of its missions to the community, Northwood houses a program of the Pathways Schools, a high school aged group of emotionally challenged students who find it hard to succeed in the public school setting. Another important mission of Northwood is The Northwood Presbyterian Child Care Center, which provides outstanding child care. It begun in 1989, as an outgrowth of a Cooperative Nursery School began in the 1966.

Memorial Garden

A Memorial Garden was established on the west side of the sanctuary for the interment of ashes of Northwood members and families. The Garden is maintained by a group of parishioners known as the "Wednesday Work Group" a group that grew out of a Landscaping Committee established twenty years ago to beautify the area around the church. This dedicated group continues its valuable service today keeping the church property in good shape for the church the Pathways School and the Child Care Center.

Fellowship

A number of annual fellowship events began in the first decade of the church and several continue today: the Chinese Dinner in the spring, the Steak Fry in the fall and the All-Church Picnic in June to celebrate the end of the church program year.

Grounds

In the 1970s and 1980s the vacant land behind the large parking lot was plowed and used for individual garden plots. Gardeners harvested and shared tasty vegetables there for a number of years until they were finally chased away, for the rabbits and deer who continually feasted on the young plants. Beginning in 2009, in memory of one of

Northwood's members, the plot, now fenced, was renamed the Hope Garden with the purpose of using the harvested crops to help feed the hungry in our community. Members of the church and community have worked countless hours to prepare the soil, plant the seeds and pick the vegetables that are taken to the Shepherds Table. We are at a stopping point this year until a new fence is erected.

Mission

Through the years Northwood has responded to emergency situations around the world. Beginning in 1974 the church helped the people of Ethiopia during a terrible drought by providing funds for the purchase of well-digging equipment. Northwood provided funds to bring two Vietnamese families to this country and establish them in the community. Closer to home, Northwood has provided assistance to the residents of Inwood House, serving breakfast at SOME, providing food for The Shepherd's Table and working with the local community ministry organizations to help with hunger and homelessness.

Northwood continues to make needed changes to our building. The new Narthex is lighter and more welcoming to those who enter. The lounge, shared by many Northwood and community groups has become a dedicated Nursery. The floor in Makemie Hall has been retiled to accompany the new valances. Other changes are being considered to meet the needs of the congregation.

Looking to the future

During its fifty years Northwood has been served by only four called Pastors. Our most recent pastor, Rev. Timothy Cargal, left in September of this year to pursue another call. Northwood is working with our Interim Pastor to prepare the congregation for a permanent pastor.

We are looking forward to working with a new Pastor to determine where God is leading us in the future. We will continue to "Seek to Know Christ and Make Him Known through Faith, Hope and Love" within our congregation and the community at large as we integrate new members into the life of the church.