Tithing for Missions and Outreach

Dear Members and Friends of North Raleigh UMC,

Our 2017 Generosity: Beyond Ourselves campaign begins by recognizing that our generosity is a response to God’s generosity toward us! An old hymn reminds us of God’s first love, “O how I love Jesus, because he first loved me.”

In the pages of this Compass issue, you will see a glimpse of the myriad of ways North Raleigh is responding to God’s love - Beyond Ourselves.

Many of our ministries that take place at North Raleigh are behind the scenes like the Backpack Buddies found in the Many Hands article. We have intergenerational opportunities as shared in the Together In Active Faith article highlights.

Reaching out Beyond Ourselves is for all ages. Our youth share about connecting to kids halfway around the world with Compassion International in their article Body, Hands, and Feet.

The Power of the Pledge is an invitation to make a huge difference as we seek to increase our church’s missionial giving through the making of our pledges. It speaks about how giving 4% of our pledges will impact our outreach Beyond Ourselves.

The life-changing power of generosity is explored in The Contemplative Corner. As a spiritual discipline, generosity connects us to the love of God and love of neighbor in a transformative way.

Please read closely the Stewardship Update to see how we seek to be faithful to financial blessings that are entrusted to North Raleigh. Also note the steps we are taking to fulfill the staffing needs as we seek to live into our Ministry Action Plan 2.0. Developing a plan of action is a good first step, but making sure the Rubber Meets the Road is where our dreams become a reality.

The joy of generosity is that there are no limits to the ways we are and can be generous. Our prayer is that this issue of Compass will inspire you to see how God might be calling you to intentional generosity.

Commitment Sunday this year will be on November 19.

I encourage you to be in prayer about how you can grow in faith through Generosity: Beyond Ourselves.

Blessings,
Duke Lackey
Senior Pastor

DEPARTMENTS

ENCOURAGING PEOPLE ON THEIR JOURNEY TO DISCOVER EXTRAORDINARY LIFE IN CHRIST

COMPASS is the monthly magazine of North Raleigh United Methodist Church.


DESIGN & LAYOUT: Lawrence Stewart

ON THE COVER: During October’s First Wednesday Fellowship Dinner, families put together hygiene kits for victims of hurricanes and floods. Photo by Cassidy Plunkett

Compass is printed by Moore Printing & Graphics, Inc.
The Generosity team and our Church Council has made the commitment to put more emphasis on gifts beyond ourselves. In fact, the title of our campaign this year is Generosity–Beyond Ourselves.

To that end, the campaign and your pledge will have significant impact on others in need outside of our church walls. Four percent of every pledge received on commitment Sunday this year will go specifically towards the missions of NRUMC.

For example, the 2017 budget for our mission ministries is $35,000. A four percent increase based on our 2017 pledges to the General Fund could bring the amount given toward mission ministries to $50,000. You have a chance to help make this commitment possible. If you have pledged in the past, please consider increasing that pledge. If you are not currently pledging, please make the pledge to help others in need. We would challenge everyone to increase our ability to provide for all areas of our budget and especially beyond the brick and mortar of our church.

A long term goal for our church will be to increase the amount provided to missions to 10 percent. Generosity beyond ourselves gets to the very heart of who we are at NRUMC and allows us to give witness to the kingdom of God.

We believe that faithful generosity is an act of worship and a means of praising the God who has blessed us so abundantly. It is in giving that we receive. Growing generosity begins with each of us by affirming that all of our gifts and skills are given by God.

Please review just a few of our church supported missions shown on the following page.

Plant the extra seed of growth in your general fund pledge this year and watch your generosity grow. On behalf of the entire Generosity Team, we thank you in advance for your generous pledge to be made on Sunday, November 19.
Mission & Outreach Opportunities

AT NORTH RALEIGH

Adopt-A-School
Appalachia Service Project
Backpack Buddies
Community Success Initiative
Family Promise of Wake County
Community Garden
Habitat for Humanity
Hearts & Hammers
Helen Wright Center
Hurricane Recovery Work Team
Kenya Microloans
Meals on Wheels
Alliance Medical
Mexico Ministry (Reynosa)
Peru Mission
Prison Ministries
Urban Ministries Food Pantry
Wheels4Hope

The ministries above are funded through the Outreach Budget. For more information, visit nrumc.org/missions.

Janet Hoffman is the mother of three boys, all very successful in their respective careers. Her oldest, Adam, is a Symbol of Success award-winning owner of a Chick-Fil-A restaurant in Oceanside, CA. Luke, her middle son, teaches music to 2nd-4th graders at Durham Academy, and according to family friends,
has no equal when it comes to how he encourages and gets the best out of his students. And Mark, her youngest, is a Duke graduate now working for Red Hat in San Mateo, CA. He is part of a very diverse group of young people setting out to change the world. So it’s no wonder that the Backpack Buddies program here at NRUMC has grown, matured, and become a fruit-producing ministry under her leadership. I sat down with Janet to talk about her 6 years managing this ministry.

What is your background and did it have anything to do with your decision to work with Backpack Buddies? I’ve never had any big career, but most importantly, I have tried to be a mom to my three sons, and that has been the best time in my life. I did a lot of volunteering then, and they were in a lot of activities, like Scouts and Taekwondo… those sorts of things. I’ve always liked to volunteer and I’ve always worked in small independent retail stores. Anyway, I was still working when I started with Backpack Buddies. I participated for two years prior to Cary (Peterson) saying that she was ready to stop and she was looking for somebody to take charge of it. I thought, “I could do that!” It’s the kind of thing you can do on your own time. Back then, Cary was sending out letters in the mail to garner volunteers, so she wasn’t using email. We moved over to email, and that was the hardest part of doing it, writing the email and explaining how everything was done. I would take three hours to write what someone else could write in thirty minutes! Still, it was something I could do to contribute, so I agreed; and that’s how I got started.

What first drew you to the Backpack Buddies program? It’s something that helps children and their families because anytime they have more food would mean less stress on the families. It’s a great way to get food into the hands...the STOMACHS... of the kids that need it the most.

What do you feel is the most significant aspect of the program? That’s a hard one. I’m not sure. I like the way it involves many people in the church. It’s an easy way for people to participate in a mission area, and a way of reaching out and giving to others. It’s not something that has to be done (at any certain time)...you buy the food and bring it in anytime during the week. You don’t have to be somewhere at a certain time. It’s a way to enable other people to give and a way to serve the ones we are giving food to.

What do you feel is the most meaningful experience that you’ve had with Backpack Buddies? If not a single experience, what part of the program do you find the most rewarding? I can’t really point to a particular experience. It’s kind of something you do because you’re serving others, and I can do it. It’s kind of a behind-the-scenes thing, and I like that. I’m not doing it to make me feel good. I’m not doing it to show other people, and nobody is really, because it’s all behind-the-scenes. You don’t really see many people that participate, but all the bags are always there! I like to give and have people not really know. I think that everyone that does it probably has the same thought.

In the past 6 years, has the program changed? Actually, it’s grown. When I started, Cary had 30 bags filled (each week). The first few years, there were around 30-35, and now there are 35-40 regularly. There are a lot of people that participate through groups, like Sunday School classes or the choir, so sometimes there are extras. Whatever we can’t use gets donated to Urban Ministries.

I’ve heard that your husband, George, has helped you over the years. Who else have been special volunteers? He (George) would always do the checking of the items in the bags to make sure nothing’s missing. Yes, he’s helped a lot; he’s taken a lot of deliveries. Most people don’t sign up to deliver. Last year, we had people sign up every month for deliveries. Eual Moss used to take our deliveries every week, but he passed away a few weeks after I started working with the program. Beth Patton and her son, Andrew Patton, have volunteered for a while. She got him to go with her on the deliveries, and it’s the first thing that has meant a lot to him, she said. It has really affected her son in a positive manner. You never think about things like that.

Can you recall the most meaningful experience that you’ve had with Backpack Buddies? If not a single experience, what part of the program do you find the most rewarding? I can’t really point to a particular experience. It’s kind of something you do because you’re serving others, and I can do it. It’s kind of a behind-the-scenes thing, and I like that. I’m not doing it to make me feel good. I’m not doing it to show other people, and nobody is really, because it’s all behind-the-scenes. You don’t really see many people that participate, but all the bags are always there! I like to give and have people not really know. I think that everyone that does it probably has the same thought.

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Body, Hands, & Feet

Compassion International is a child-advocacy ministry that pairs compassionate people with those who are suffering from poverty. The ministry releases children from spiritual, economic, social, and physical poverty. The goal is for each child to become a responsible and fulfilled adult. Compassion’s work has grown from modest beginnings in South Korea in 1952 when American evangelist Rev. Everett Swanson felt compelled to help 35 children orphaned by the Korean conflict. Today, it is a worldwide ministry where millions of children are now reaping the benefits of one man’s clear, God-given vision.

ANTONIO MIGUEL SIBAJA
is an 11-year-old boy registered with Compassion’s Child Sponsorship Program in Colombia. Life is hard for Antonio’s family, who don’t always have enough money for food, but their situation turned desperate when flood waters destroyed their home. Thanks to support from Compassion International’s emergency assistance fund, Antonio’s family is not homeless. They have a new, sturdier home, and Antonio has a yard where he can play soccer.
Have you ever felt the desire to help others in need? I’m sure that you have wondered how you can make a difference in someone else’s life. Several years ago, when I began attending youth group here at NRUMC, my fellow classmates and I began to wonder the same thing. We started pondering on ways that we could make a difference. As we were involved in helping our church and community through service projects, we began to see how God was using us to impact the lives of others. Once we started to see and feel those effects, we wanted to do more. We wanted to be the body, the hands and feet that were capable of changing believers and non-believers alike. We started to dream big and believe that if it could be imagined, it could be achieved. How far could we stretch the body of Christ in order to assist those in need? We discovered that anything is possible when we have a family of student believers, we were able to see that with God’s children in need, no matter how far away we are, we can always act as the body, reaching out to serve God’s children in need, any where in the world. After coming to youth group a couple months after Jason and Jen of course, are Joel and Brenda. And after a few weeks you might even be able to remind Jason when he “forgets.”

Emmanuel wants to become a doctor, which is a dream that he could not afford to have without Compassion’s support.

Sydney Ferrell graduated from Meredith College in May 2017 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Vocal Performance and Theatre. She is currently teaching voice and piano at Magic Academy South in Wake Forest and at Palmer Voice Studios in Apex. In her free time, she enjoys performing locally and in Nashville, TN. Sydney is also an active member of the North Carolina Master Chorale, under the direction of Al Sturgis. She plans on pursuing a Masters of Vocal Pedagogy at Belmont University in the fall of 2018. Sydney is thrilled to have the opportunity to share the joy of Jesus through her gift of talent.

Madison Mueller is a junior at Millbrook High School and loves soccer and photography. She is passionate about serving others and volunteering and considers North Raleigh UMC a second home.
As a community of faith, we are called together in God’s mission to love our neighbors. First Wednesday, a new ministry of our church that started this fall, is a time when our congregation is invited to gather for fellowship, and together to join in an outreach ministry of our church to serve those in our community. Groups within the church volunteer to prepare and serve dinner for those who attend, and then are filled with the Spirit and sent being served; participants of all ages work side-by-side to serve others.

At NRUMC, we are blessed with many opportunities to take care of our neighbors, whether locally or beyond ourselves. Three times a year, our church offers a safe place for families facing homelessness in ministry with Family Promise (formerly WIHN). Their beds are made with care, food is provided by many groups in our congregation, and drivers offer their time to be sure the families who join us are able to work and go to school. Many people offer support to help make this ministry possible. Recently, the families’ rooms were set with a special welcome of gift bags, put together especially for them during October’s First Wednesday event.

In response to recent storms in areas of Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico, many of us watched the news feeling helpless despite our earnest prayer for God’s care over our brothers and sisters who have been left homeless or lost loved ones. In addition to the gift bags for Family Promise, church members put together much-needed hygiene kits that will serve as a blessing to to those who receive them and those who participated in the mission project.

All are invited and welcome. Young children can find company in adults who might work alongside them in a mission project. Older adults might find life in sharing the joy of Christ with youth and younger parents. Families come to gather together around a shared table with others. Everyone comes to be family.

First Wednesday is a wonderful opportunity for church members to join in as the hands and feet of Christ to serve in ministries that are already happening in our church, allowing us a greater reach and a broader understanding of the needs of our community. The first two months included missions to support Family Promise, Driving Kindness, United Methodist Committee on Relief, and Baileywick Elementary School. In the remaining gatherings this year, we will reflect on the season of Advent and create ways to share the love of Christ with homebound members of our community, and with our Angel Tree Prison Ministry.

The first gift of the evening comes in the meal. Delicious food is prepared by groups in our congregation who feel
called to serve in the heart of their church family. This is more than a night once a month when the rest of us don’t have to cook. This is an opportunity for fellowship among church members and visitors of all ages. This is an opportunity to sit together as family and give thanks for the hands that have prepared a meal, and for the blessing it is to use our own hands to serve others. The second gift of the evening comes in the opportunity to serve among those present. By sharing a meal together and serving together, we get to know one another as servants of God. We can remind one another of what it looks like to extend the hands of Christ. We can encourage one another at different points in our faith journeys, and in different seasons of life. And we can make an impact on our community inside our walls, in our immediate community, and beyond. The third gift of the evening comes in the lasting impact these connections might have when we give them over to God. We pray that God might be at work in us, among us, and certainly beyond us.

We are called together in a faith that is active. God’s call to be like Christ compels us to serve our neighbors, to love through doing. This one night a month is an opportunity to participate in God’s mission of restoration among a community of love.

By sharing a meal together and serving together, we get to know one another as servants of God. We can remind one another of what it looks like to extend the hands of Christ.
Overcrowded Sunday school classes, scarcity of meeting space, and greater demands for new ministries has required us to develop creative solutions within our existing campus until our long-term plans can be developed and implemented through a clearly defined strategic plan. We began this process in the youth center earlier this year with the purchase of movable partitions that allowed us to create multiple classrooms for Sunday School and small group discussions. This worked well, but ultimately led us to discover that we needed to rethink where we held Sunday School for all ages. With a collaborative effort from our Children’s, Youth, and Preschool ministries, we were able to relocate and redistribute the Sunday School classes to areas that were appropriate by age. The middle and high school kids now meet in the large youth center room for worship services that incorporate the youth band, a topic-led discussion and break-out for small groups. This frees up our meeting rooms in the youth building for our younger classes and allows them to meet in a quieter, more focused setting.

Soon, we will be transforming E-26 in the Education building to hold the very vibrant 6th grade Sunday School class. By removing the old sofas and miscellaneous furniture from E-26 and replacing it with folding tables and chairs, this will add another meeting space for all to utilize.

As we continue to develop a long-term strategic plan for expanding our facilities, we will look for additional creative and multi-functional options to get more out of our existing space.

Jesus stood in a boat and preached to people standing on the shore, stood on a mountain and preached to thousands, sat with a woman at a well in the heat of the day, and had the roof of a house he was in torn open while he talked. What are we willing to do? Where are we willing to meet those who want to know more about Jesus? God will answer our needs for the future. We need to make use of what we have today, using our imagination, sharing our space, and keeping our kids off the roof!

—Jason Darden
Welcome to The Contemplative Corner—a new feature which will be appearing in each future issue of Compass magazine. Here we will begin to explore the dimensions of contemplative spirituality and practice as a means of further opening our hearts, minds, and spirits to the always and ever present Presence of God.

In this issue, in keeping with the theme of stewardship, we will focus on the spiritual practice of generosity. Generosity is both a spiritual value and a spiritual practice. It is a universal value taught around the world in every major world religion as a core value and as a practice. Generosity is about much more than simply writing a check, or making a donation. It’s about:

- Living in love and trust rather than fear and isolation
- Opening our hearts to give as we have received
- Creating a world of abundance rather than scarcity
- Honoring our oneness and interconnectedness

Ultimately, generosity is about growing into the kind of person you want to become and creating the kind of world you wish to live in. When we, God’s people, practice openhearted generosity, freely sharing of our time, our talents, and our financial resources, we participate in creating a world where everyone’s needs are met, a world in which there is always enough for all. Generosity is a sacred trust that God is indeed benevolent, and that we will always be cared for. It is being mindful of what Jesus taught us about God’s tender care for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. It is the refusal to give into the fear of scarcity which says “I must hold onto what is mine. I must provide for my own first and foremost because if I don’t, no one else will.” Generosity looks out through the eyes of Love at a world in need and is moved by compassion to respond. It is an act which demonstrates that we truly trust that we are anchored in the depths of a Love which will never fail us, and which will always sustain us.

Once long ago, a young boy stood in a large throng of hungry people holding nothing more than 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread. It was his to keep, if he chose to cling to it. Instead, he offered what he had, and 5,000 people were fed. This story from the gospels illustrates where human willingness to trust in openhearted generosity meets God’s goodness and desire to provide all that we need. It is at this intersection where true miracles can begin to happen in our world.

I urge you, in this season when we set aside a day for offering our thanks to God for his generosity to us, to begin to expand the spiritual practice of generosity in your life. As followers of Christ, we are called to imitate His life which will one day be our own. When we live as He lived, giving freely of all that we have, God will bless us all abundantly. What greater way to thank God than to give generously to His work, so that others share in the blessings of Christ as well!
God Is in the Manger

“There are only two places where the powerful and great in this world lose their courage, tremble in the depths of their souls, and become truly afraid. These are the manger and the cross of Jesus Christ.”

These stirring words are among forty devotions that guide and inspire readers as they move thematically through the weeks of Advent and Christmas, from waiting and mystery to redemption, incarnation, and joy. Supplemented by an informative introduction, short excerpts from Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s letters, and passages from his Christmas sermons, these daily devotions are timeless and moving reminders of the true gift of Christmas.

Purchase your copy of God Is in the Manger from the church office (info@nrumc.org or 919.847.1536) and join us for this hopeful and inspiring study for the Advent season.

TUESDAYS, 12/5-12/19
11:30 A.M.-1:00 P.M.
(BRING YOUR LUNCH!)

OUTREACH | Generosity: Where the Rubber Meets the Road by Duke Lackey

Generosity: Where the Rubber Meets the Road

We are entering our season of Generosity: the time of year where we consider how we are living out God’s future in our daily lives. “How am I using my time, talents, gifts, and witness to the glory of God as a part of NRUMC?”

We have spent the last 3 months as a community discerning our vision and setting our priorities to fulfill God’s vision for our life together. The Church Council has been discerning our priorities through revising our 2014 Ministry Action Plan and proposing “MAP 2.0.” In addition, Ashley and I have been blessed to hold 23 listening sessions with over 300 people in attendance. That’s close to one half of the worshipping community! An astounding response! So thank you!

Many themes kept arising in both MAP 2.0 and in the listening sessions, particularly connection, communication, and transparency.

Again and again, we heard the following questions:

- How do we connect to the elderly, sick, and homebound?
- How do we support our new members in connecting within our church?
- How do we connect to people outside the church that are hungry to hear the Gospel?
- How do we help young families with children and youth connect to one another and grow in faith?
- How do we stay connected to our high school graduates as they leave for school and work?
- How do we stay connected to a growing membership without letting people fall through the cracks?

Through our discernment process, our MAP 2.0 teams have identified our ministry priorities to ensure maximum impact and fruitfulness. To address connection, communication, and transparency, the proposal consists of hiring two new staff positions as soon as possible to monitor our connections. These two full-time program assistants would help us respond to our growing community and to prepare for God’s future for our church as we anticipate growth.

Currently, we have a wonderful staff, an “A” team. However, we are missing the administrative support to keep people connected, informed, and to create processes for transparency. For a worshipping congregation of 600-800, we need four administrative personnel to support our program staff. We now have 1.5 that can work with staff specifically and one that oversees all communications.

So, this Generosity season, I invite us all to be in prayer over the next several weeks, each asking how MY time, MY talents, MY gifts, and MY witness may be joined with others to fulfill our priorities to “Encourage People on their Journey to Discover Extraordinary Life in Christ.”

Grace and Peace,

Duke Lackey

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Serving Christ by Serving You!

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Our Staff
Serving Christ by Serving You!

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