
October 2009

THE MISSION OF NORTH BRANCH REFORMED CHURCH
*is to invite all people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
 that results in a continuing worship of God and
 daily service in the Holy Spirit's presence.*

November 2009 Messenger Deadline: October 22nd + Bulletin Deadline: Each week by Thursday Noon



**Message from
Pastor Todd**

HAPPY TENTH ANNIVERSARY!

As I do every year in September on our anniversary (and the anniversary of Hurricane Floyd), I talk with you about where we've been and where God might be leading us. Think of it as taking stock.

First, I have to say that I hope it's been as great a decade for you as it has been for me. And more so than for me, but for my family. You have no idea what it means to me that you shortsheets my wife's bed at a woman's retreat, or that my kids have friends to play hide and seek in the dark sanctuary and adults that take them to Kentucky. So then having the honor of praying with you through a tough time, is just icing on the cake for me

But honestly, I wish that we had started this 50 years ago. Why? Because my decade-long North Branch prayer--*LORD, renew us*--would have been so much easier. For we minister together in a depressing time for churches. A time when, if present trends continue, the church will be 50% smaller by 2030. When 49 states, except Hawaii, have seen steep decline in church attendance just since 2000! (NJ is down 11.2%!). Even at NBRC, we saw a peak in 2002 and slow but sure decline since. It has taking me 10 years to begin to come to terms with these trends. Though it helps me to know that our nursery (farm system) is stronger than ever right now, and last Sunday's Rally Day was the best in five years, and three out of the last five months have seen an increase in attendance, its still tough.

But those are just statistics, what do they mean for people? Since we are just now discovering the tremendous vitality that faith in God releases into our lives, this is a real loss for our neighbors. In a book written by Dr. Harold Koenig the Director of the Duke

University's Center for the Study of Religion and Health, he paints this churchless scenario:

- 1) People will die sooner since in one study the mortality rate is 36% lower for weekly church attenders vs. less than weekly attenders;
- 2) Healthcare costs will skyrocket because religious folk are about half as likely as non-religious to enter the hospital in the first place, and then stay only 1/2 as long!
- 3) Mental health will decline because religious teens are less likely than irreligious teens to commit suicide, abuse drugs or alcohol, commit crimes and have sex early!

So, I am both sad for our society, and determined to *plead* with God to renew the church!

How is God revitalizing the church? I want to answer this by looking at experience and at Scripture. First at my experience with supervising our Classis' new church starts. Did you know that, even with the failure of our daughter church, our Classis of 32 churches stands to have around eight more new churches by 2012—20% increase? Right now these eight church plants are about the only churches growing in our region of the RCA. We hope to organize the first of these, which NBRC helped to start, Carlos and Carmen's Reading church this February. (By the way, I don't really consider *Ignite!* a failure. You only fail when you stop trying. My view is we just learned one way not to do it.)

Why is God growing our church plants but letting our established churches die on the vine? I think because our established churches' DNA is from 50 years ago, and the church plants' DNA is 21st century. What do I mean? Not just style of music, or sermons, or small groups, but the primary orientation of established churches tends to be "**Come to us**" whereas the primary orientation of church plants (and revitalizing churches) is "**Go to them.**" *Come churches* wait for folks to come. *Go churches* are out blessing the community

How does Scripture move us from a traditional Come church to a revitalized Go

church? We realize who God has made us to be. First off, you are not a member, **you are a minister.** Mark and I are NBRC's pastors, but you are NBRC's ministers! And, you are not just ministers within the church, but at school, at work, in the neighborhood. As you let your light shine out there, folks seeking God are attracted as moths to light.

One of the best corners of NBRC where I see folk realizing they're ministers is in the Senior High youth group. Watching as a parent from afar, post-Anna and Matt, I see kids stepping up to make this their group. They had 26 kids out last Sunday night!

But God does not just give you a title and leave you on your own, Jesus gives you talents to empower you as minister. Do you know your gifts? You will find your greatest fulfillment to make a difference in the use of your talents. In Japan I tried to be an English teacher for 2 1/2 years. I finally concluded that God did not gift me to teach. My first clue was the day I substituted in homeroom for the 300 lbs. Judo teacher. At our Christian school we were supposed to close the day with a hymn. So I announced one and began to sing, but no one joined me. Worse, the class president was the lead goof off. I lost my temper and threw the hymnbook at him. The shocked class quieted down, I said, "Sing it again," and concluded I wasn't cut out for class discipline. On the other hand, I've seen the incredible human resource gift that Mary Beth Iodice lent us in helping David Mojica redirect; or the township political gifts that Bob Kiser is using to rewrite the sewer ordinance in Bridgewater to address the 15 fold increase that religious institutions were assessed in 2009.

Lastly, the purpose of being who you are, a minister using your gifts in God's world, is to build up the body of Christ. As most established churches, we do very little evangelism, which doesn't bode well for the future where only the Go/evangelizing churches will stay vital. However, we are doing more, and you know how--through small groups. Those groups that are inviting spiritually hungry people from the neighborhood in are not only growing the group but growing the body of Christ. Its happening praise God!

So I am asking you, ministers gifted by God to build up Jesus' body, to join me in my decade-long NBRC prayer: **Lord, renew me/us.** Listen to God's answer

Peace and joy,



Adult Education

DISCOVERY CLASS: Are you interested in discovering God's call for you to participate more fully in this church and



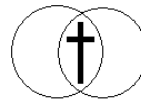
Christ's mission? Come to this class (formerly called the New Member Class) led by Pastor Todd to discover: God's call in the Bible; God's call to the community of class participants; God's call to participate in our church's mission. On Sunday, **October 4th**, the class will meet from Noon to 1:00 PM and determine whether to meet for seven sessions at same time or in three two-hour time blocks. Childcare will be available. You may explore this experience without becoming a member of our church. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall.

ADULT EDUCATION: During the month of October, Tom Vaden will be leading a study in the Upper Room at 9:15 AM of the *Fundamental, Faith, Freedom and Fruit* that are *Found* in the New Testament letter Paul wrote to the Galatians. We'll have *Fun*.

MONTHLY NOON BIBLE STUDY: Meets on the second Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, **October 13th**, and will focus on the Book of John.

SMALL GROUPS: Interested in being part of a circle of care with Christ in the center? Join a small group. Most of our groups meet monthly and function as either a Bible Study, task group, or support group. For more information contact Pastor Todd in the church office.

Christian Action



MISSION OFFERING: We collect a mission offering on the first Sunday of each month. Mission Offering envelopes are at the beginning of each month in the offering envelope packages. Additional envelopes will be placed in the pew racks.



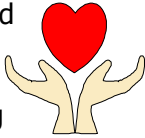
CROP WALK: The 2009 CROP Walk will be held on Sunday, **October 25th** at 1:30 pm! Church World Service (CWS) sponsors this worldwide event each year to raise funds to feed the Hungry, and we, the congregation and friends of North Branch Reformed Church, participate enthusiastically in this project each year. Please come to the CROP WALK Table in Fellowship Hall after the service for more information and/or to sign up to participate as a Walker or as a Sponsor for a Walker. Please call Fred Yarnell (908-722-4759) if you are willing to assist with sign ups.

FOUR SEASONS OF GIVING: The Christian Action committee will be collecting **SC Jail Chaplancy Children's Gifts** during **October, November and December.** A box is available in Fellowship Hall for your donations.

FROZEN FOOD TRAYS: Christian Action reminds everyone to use the frozen food trays found in fellowship hall for leftovers. These meals are distributed to those in need in the area. The trays are easy to use and you can leave them in the freezers in the kitchen at your convenience. Please help with this valuable mission of the church.

Christian Care

JANUS BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP: The purpose of this group is to offer education and support in an attempt to build friendship and understanding among people suffering from loss and aid them in coping with their losses. This group meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM at The Centre at Raritan, 1124 Highway 202S-A2, Raritan, NJ 08869. The meetings for the next two months will be Tuesday, **October 13th**. For more information please contact Barbara Ronca. M.S.W., L.C.S.W., Counseling and Therapy Services at 908-218-9062.



FLU CLINIC: The Community Visiting Nurse Association will hold a clinic that will administer flu and pneumonia shots on Sunday, **October 18th**, after the second service from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM. The cost is \$25.00 or, if you are a Senior with Medicare Part B, they will bill Medicare. For more information call Kathy Herrman (908-231-1917) or the office (908-725-2313).



CHRISTIAN CARE SERVICES: Blood Pressure Check: 2nd Sunday of every month in Fellowship Hall at 10:00 AM. **Medical Equipment:** Judy Wilkinson, 908-218-1575. **Prayer Concerns:** Kathy Herrman, 908-231-1917. **Small Chore Services for the Elderly:** Louise Manning, 908-722-3834 or call any of the deacons listed in the bulletin. **Transportation Needs:** Alice Swan, 908-722-5308. **DVDs and Audio Cassettes of worship services for shut-ins:** Fred Swan, 908-722-5308. For further information regarding Christian Care and its services, please call Louise Manning 908-722-3834 or Nancy Vollers 908-725-7656.

PLEASE NOTIFY us when you or a member of your family is admitted to a hospital. This knowledge will be useful for visitation and prayers. You may contact the church office, 908-725-2313, Pastor Todd, 908-725-2313, or Louise Manning, 908-722-3834.

Fellowship

FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS are needed for October through December. You only need to prepare beverages (coffee, tea and



juice), which are supplied by the Fellowship Committee. There is no need to supply baked goods. Please signup in Fellowship Hall.

FELLOWSHIP SIGNUP: If your committee will be hosting Fellowship Hour, please make sure that you have added your committee to the signup sheet in Fellowship Hall *including a contact name and telephone number.*

Finance

2009 OFFERING UPDATE THROUGH AUGUST: The 2009 budget for the North Branch Reformed Church totals \$542,857. To fund this budget we need to receive \$506,307 in pledges and offerings. The balance of \$36,550 is projected to be covered by other income such as the special offerings, interest, and donations for facilities use. Based on historical giving patterns, the percentage of \$506,307 which is needed each month to meet that goal has been calculated.



Needed offering year-to-date	\$317,535
Actual offering year-to-date	307,287
Difference	\$ 10,248

Please note that we are running behind. ***If you have fallen behind in your pledge, it would be appreciated if you were to take this opportunity to bring your commitment up to date.*** If you have any questions about these numbers, please ask any member of the Finance Committee.

HAVE YOU REMEMBERED THE CHURCH IN YOUR WILL?: Get a brochure from church on our new endowment fund.

Interfaith Hospitality Network

VOLUNTEER NEEDED: IHN/SC is looking for a volunteer to teach a father how to read starting in October. Preferably the volunteer would be able to meet with him in his home in North Plainfield. For more details, please contact Karen Donahue at 908-704-1920 or karenihn@verizon.net.



Kirkside

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! A *Special Preview Sale* of exceptional garage sale items will be held Sunday, October 4th, in Fellowship Hall before and after both worship services.



Kirkside's semi-annual Garage Sale will take place on Saturday, **October 10th**, 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We need your help in setting up first thing in the morning, and then for the clean up at 2:00 PM, anything in between is greatly appreciated too. Contact: Nancy Keeler (908-534-4740) or Diane Laich (908-526-6286).

VACANCY: Do you know anyone interested in living in a shared house for seniors? There is a vacancy for one resident, male or female, age 62 or older, for a second-floor room at Kirkside. Please contact Barbara O'Rourke at 908-526-8115 for further information.



Men's Ministries

The next **MEN'S BREAKFAST** is Saturday, **October 17th**, from 8:00 AM to 9:30 AM in the Fellowship Hall. All men are invited for good food, good friends, and a better faith.



Miscellaneous

BLOOD DRIVE: Bridget Sweetman is sponsoring an American Red Cross Blood Drive to assist her in earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. The drive will be held Saturday, **October 3rd**, 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM at the Bradley Gardens Fire Department, 24 Old York Road, Bridgewater. Appointments are preferred and could be made at www.pleasegiveblood.org (enter Sponsor Code 14175) or call Bridget Sweetman (908-304-3941). Your support is greatly appreciated!



Prayer Needs

REMEMBER IN PRAYER: Evelyn Fisher, Marie Hunter (daughter-in-law of Marilyn Hunter), Marilyn Hunter, Pete Indrisek, Mary Knapp, Henry Larsen, Terri Martin, Jim McKelvey, Cathy Pfauth, Harold Polhemus.

PRAYERS FOR OUR SERVICEMEN: Michael Campbell (nephew of Janet Kolb), Tom Cantilina, Adam Clark (in Iraq), Jim Crosley (husband of Jennifer (Munzenmaier) Crosley), Nichole Haas (niece of Ron & Lori Taylor), Greg Hall (nephew of Pat Cahill, in Iraq), Rob McCracken (husband of Meg (Yarnell) McCracken), Colin O'Rourke, Marc Reinecker (cousin of Rick Smith, in Iraq).

Preschool

PRESCHOOL PTO SECOND ANNUAL VENDOR NIGHT: VENDORS WANTED for Friday, **November 13th** from 6:00 - 9:00 PM! Last year, we hosted over 25 vendors for a fabulous pre-holiday shopping spree. Everyone had a fun time shopping while raising money for the Preschool. If you're interested in participating, please contact PTO Co-Chair Nicole Young at NicolePYoung@verizon.net or 908-526-1537 for details.

2009-2010 PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION: Did you know the Preschool offers a 5% discount to church members, and we give you priority in the registration process? Registration is currently open. Check the Preschool website at www.nbrc.com for classes and tuition rates.



Sympathies

OUR SYMPATHY to family of **Bob Karnell** who passed away on Sunday, **September 20th**.

Women's Ministry

NBRC'S WOMEN RETREAT: Join us at Hope House on **November 14th**. The day promises to be a time of *faith, fellowship, fun, sharing, and love*. Sue McGeown will be leading the discussion. More information to be announced.



BODY & SOUL is a 75-minute cardiovascular fitness class for every fitness level. The class meets in Fellowship Hall, Monday and Wednesday mornings from 9:15 to 10:30 AM. Come try a class. Childcare provided. Classes are also available in the evenings and Saturday AM. For details, contact Eileen Gilmartin (908-725-2694), an ACE/CPR certified instructor.

HELP WANTED: Body & Soul Fitness is in immediate need of a childcare provider. Earn a few extra dollars while your toddler play with other children. Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 9:15 to 10:30 am. For more information, call Eileen Gilmartin at 908-725-2694.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY MONTHLY MEETING will be held on Tuesday, **October 13th** at 7:30 PM at NBRC in the Upper Lounge. We warmly welcome all women of the church interested in sharing their ideas to help with our mission.



CHANCEL FLOWERS: If you would like to provide the Sunday flower arrangement in memory of someone or just would like to provide an arrangement, there is a sign-up sheet for this purpose in Fellowship Hall. See Fred Yarnell, 908-722-4759, for details.

JOURNEY WITH JESUS: Read almost 100 personal stories of faith from North Branch Church members. The book is only \$12.00. North Branch Women's Ministries will donate all proceeds from the sale of "Journeys with Jesus" to local missions. To obtain a copy, contact Pam Frueh at 908-526-1829.

BLOW-OUT SHIRT SALE: ALL SHIRTS \$10!!! *Pink T-Shirt, Blue Golf Shirt and Denim Shirt are available.* Two logos--"Let Us Encourage One Another" and "Be Still." All proceeds go to our local missions. For further information, please call the office at 908-725-2313.

Worship

SUNDAY MORNING PRAYER GROUP meets in the Upper Room on Sunday mornings at 8:45 AM before the

worship services to pray for the ongoing ministry of NBRC. Anyone wishing to join is welcome!!!

Youth

PARENTS OF TEENS SUPPORT GROUP led by Pastor Todd will meet every Wednesday in October from 7 PM beginning **October 7th**. Contact Pastor Todd at 908-725-2313 or buurstra@NBRC.com for details.

NURSERY CARE: Childcare is available for children ages 0 to 3 years during both worship services on Sunday. Our nursery is a cheerful, warm and inviting space staffed by loving volunteers. For information or questions, please contact Natsuko Buurstra, 908-252-3727.

HOW DOES JESUS WANT HIS CHURCH TO BE HIS HANDS AND FEET TO THOSE LOOKING FOR WORK? During this time of high unemployment, we will publicize information for those seeking jobs in the Messenger, bulletin and, if requested, our website. Jobseekers should email the office (office@NBRC.com) the information listed below (with your name which, of course, will not be publicized), and we are asking job holders to be reading, praying and sending helpful information to the same office email.

Type of Job Sought	Title of Last Job Held	Short Description of the Industry	Years Experience in that Industry
Transportation/Logistics Management	International Air Manager	Responsible for air exports and imports at both EWR & JFK airports.	20+
Supervisor (warehouse, inventory control, dispensing, manufacturing.)	Warehouse Manager GMP compliant warehouse	Pharma/Biotech	10
Program/Project/Product Manager	Coordinator of Product Management - Marketing	Wireless Telecommunications	8+
Customer Service/ Administrative/ Clerical		Wireless Telecommunications	20+
Executive/Administrative Assistant	Executive Assistant	Exec. Assistant to President of a division marketing company. Made travel arrangements, presentation materials, managed calendar, planned meetings, client dinners, and client visits. Also did some expense tracking	22 years at company, 13 as Exec. Assistant
Software Quality Assurance Analyst or Manager	Software Quality Assurance Analyst	Responsible for testing product and <i>assuring</i> that a quality product is delivered within a promised timeframe.	Over 22 years in Information Technology
Software Configuration Management, Software Release Management, and Defect Tracking Management	Software Quality Assurance Analyst	Manage the software configuration management process of versioning objects, code, and documentation. Manage Defect Tracking process and promotion of change requests from developer to tester to client. <i>Monitor and report to senior management the progress of defects and customer issues from receipt to release.</i>	Over 22 years in Information Technology
Procedural / Systems Analyst /Technical Writer	Software Quality Assurance Analyst	Soup to nuts "full project lifecycle" analysis, requirements planning, design and implementation of software systems.	Over 22 years in Information Technology
Corporate Trainer	Software Quality Assurance Analyst	Train client or in-house staff pertaining to procedures, methods, or the "how to" of using a software product.	Over 22 years in Information Technology

**STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION
AND OFFICE HOURS**

Telephone: 908-725-2313

Fax: 908-725-5682

Email: Office@NBRC.com

Web Page: www.NBRC.com

Pastor Todd Buurstra

Pastor of Worship and Witness

E-mail: Buurstra@NBRC.com

8:30 AM to 5:00 PM - Monday thru Thursday

Evening hours & meetings by appointment

Brian Katona

Music Director

E-mail: briankatona@gmail.com or

Music@NBRC.com

Jennifer Landrieu

Preschool Director - 908-725-2326

E-mail: Preschool@NBRC.com

Doris Munzenmaier

Office Administrator

E-mail: Office@NBRC.com

8:30 AM to 5:00 PM - Monday thru Friday

Office periodically closed at lunchtime.

Barbara O'Rourke

Kirkside Administrator

E-mail: Kirkside@NBRC.com

Pastor Mark E. Swart

Pastor of Discipleship

E-mail: Swart@NBRC.com

8:30 AM to 5:00 PM - Mon, Tues, Thurs and Friday

Evening hours & meetings by appointment

CONSISTORY

Officers: President Pastor Todd Buurstra, Co-Vice
President Pastor Mark E. Swart, Clerk Jane
Yarnell, Treasurer Doris Munzenmaier

Elders: Sue Betz, Tim Chamberlin, Wes Frueh, Janet
Kolb, Diane Laich, Carlos Lugo, Carmen Lugo,
Co-Vice President Tim Sandford

Deacons: Doug Bateman, Violet Coy, Larry Fox, Linda
Mayerik, Ruthann Pauli, Chair Keith Strege

Committees and Chairperson(s):

Adult Education (sub of Christian Ed) - Sue McGeown

Audio Visual (sub of Worship) - Bruce Taggart

Building & Grounds - Dennis McGale, Keith Strege

Cemetery - Jim Housten

Chancel (sub of Women's Ministry) - Fred Yarnell

Christian Action - Lynn Ritter Cargill

Christian Care - Louise Manning, Nancy Vollers

Christian Education - Donna Taggart

Church Planting - Mary Beth Iodice

Ecumenical Relations - Bruce McConnell

Fellowship - Nancy Fiedler

Finance - Wendy Kroon

Hope House Maintenance (sub of B&G) - Marty Herrman

Kirkside (sub of Christian Action) - Kathy Rue

Memorial Gifts - Janet Kolb

Men's Ministry - Wes Frueh

Music - Patti Harmer

Pastor/Staff Relations - Paul Soskey

Preschool Board - Larry Fox

Women's Ministry - Laurel Ennis

Worship - Carrie Dilgard

WORSHIP SERVICES FOR OCTOBER

EVERY SUNDAY

9:15 AM - Contemporary Worship Service

9:15 AM - Adult Education

9:30 AM - Church School

10:15 AM - Fellowship Time

10:45 AM - Traditional Blended Worship Service

SUNDAY, October 4, 2009

(Worldwide Communion Sunday)

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor Todd Buurstra will preach.

Revelation 5

SUNDAY, October 11, 2009

Nineteenth Sunday after

Pentecost

Pastor Todd Buurstra will preach.

Drama: 12 Ways to Say "No"

Proverbs 1:20-33

SUNDAY, October 18, 2009

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor Mark Swart will preach.

SUNDAY, October 25, 2009

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor Todd Buurstra will preach.

Stewardship Sunday