



The Northwestern

News and Notes

Unity Service

Our next Unity Service will be **Sunday, September 23rd**, at 9:30 AM. Come for a very special time of worship in English, Spanish, and Korean, with lunch to follow. Though our world tries to separate us based on the ways we're different, as Christians we proclaim a gospel that tears down barriers. Don't miss out on being a part of it! There will be no classes.



Baby Shower

All ladies are invited to a baby shower at the Odums' home for Robert and Natalie Waters on Sunday, **September 30th**, at 1 PM. They are registered at www.babylist.com/baby-SweetWaters. Hostesses are Michell Bain, Colette Blakely, Jan Okey, and Laura Odum.

Shults-Lewis Commodities Drives

Shults-Lewis Child and Family Services has asked us to help meet their commodities needs this year by collecting fruit juice. If you'd like to help, you can bring bottles of 100% fruit juice to the building and place them on the pew at the front of the auditorium. The last day for collecting juice will be Sunday, December 9th. Thanks for your generosity! You can also help by donating to their "perishables" fund for milk, meat, and fresh produce.



Gathering Times

Sunday

Worship	9:30 AM
(English, Korean)	
Bible Study (All)	11:00 AM
Worship (Spanish)	12:00 PM
Worship (English)	4:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study (All)	7:30 PM
-------------------	---------

Upcoming Events

September

23	Unity Service (9:30 AM)
30	Baby shower for Natalie and Robert Waters (1 PM @ the Odums')

Welcome to Northwest! We're glad you're here today. If you're a visitor, please consider yourself an honored guest.

Please feel free to join in worship this morning to whatever extent you feel comfortable. Please fill out a visitors' card and put it in the offering plate so we can have a record of your visit.

[Sermons are available online.](#)

Servants

Help Wanted!

We need volunteers every Sunday to work in our **food pantry** from 1:00 - 3:30.

[Sign up Here](#)

Winston Manor

9/16/18 Javier Herrera, Rene Torres
9/23/18 Clarence Thrasher
9/30/18 Perry Littrell

Help Wanted - Communion Prep

Can you prepare communion before the 9:30 worship service?

[Sign Up for a Sunday Here](#)

Last Sunday

Sunday School	49
AM Worship	141
PM Worship	12
Wednesday PM	30
Offering	
Regular	\$ 6,493.24
Orphans' Lifeline	\$ 100.00
Budget	\$ 5,205.00

Online Directory

[Click here for the online church directory.](#) See Patrick if you need the password.

Worship Gathering

9:30 AM

Singing: Matt Bain

We Worship Together

500 O Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Revelation Song

30 Alleluia, Sing to Jesus

Reading — Psalm 9:1-2, 7-11

581 Sing On

982 We Shall Assemble

We Hear the Word of the Lord

Reading: Alan Bain — Ephesians 5:15-20

Sermon: Patrick Odum — *The Voice: Singing to God and For Each Other How Can I Keep from Singing?*

Prayer for the Needs of the Church: Alan Bain

We Come to the Table

How Beautiful

Communion Meditation: Rawn Reinhard

Table: Edison Kannakai, Jim Gunter, Robert Waters, Mike Thrasher

Offering and Announcements: Alan Bain

We Go Out As Witnesses

583 Sing to Me of Heaven

Prayer: Robert Nunoo

4:00 Worship

Singing: Perry Littrell

Opening Prayer: Alan Bain

Meditation: Matt Bain

Closing Prayer: Dan Allen

Patrick's Points

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

-Matthew 23:25-28 (NIV)

Our basement really smelled bad. So bad you didn't want to be in it for more than a minute.

It wasn't usually like that, you understand. But on this particular Saturday — ugh. The strong smell of mildew. Mold, maybe. Or something. We'd had a little water seep in after strong rains and wet the carpet and pad in one room. It had never been this bad, though. Something was clearly going on. But the carpet didn't seem to be wet. Well, maybe it had been, and the mold had started growing.

Not knowing what else to do, I decided to pull out the carpet. It was getting kind of old anyway, and if it was as moldy as it smelled then it certainly didn't need to be in the house. I went down and started cutting and pulling. After an hour or so of work, the carpet and pad in what we still call "the playroom" (despite the fact that the one who mostly played in it is now a junior in college) was rolled up in three or four sections, ready to be dragged to the curb.

Funny thing, though — I never found the mold I expected to find.

Well, maybe it was in the pad or the carpet or something. Maybe when I dragged it out to the curb, the smell would be gone. So I opened the door to the outside, the door that leads to steps that go up to ground level. The door that gets used once or twice a week. I opened the door, and it hit me.

When I say it hit me, I mean I realized that what we were smelling wasn't mold at all.

But I also mean that the smell hit me. I mean, really hit me. Like I imagine an armored truck would hit me.

The smell of a squirrel that had expired, oh, I'm guessing 5 or 6 days before and had spent the better part of a week...contributing to the ecosystem, let's just say. On the steps just outside my basement door.

The good news is that once my late little friend was hosed off my steps and his remains (mostly tail) buried in my backyard — deeply, and with all the honors deserved by a squirrel of his stature — the smell was out of my basement in no time at all.

What if I had never opened that door, though?

Go along with me here. What if I just replaced the carpet? Would the smell be gone? No, even with beautiful new carpet, or expensive tile, or whatever, the basement would still stink. It would look better, newer, but you still wouldn't want to spend any time there.

So what if I placed some air fresheners around? Well, that might help a little. It might mask the odor. Make it smell like death and lilacs (which would not be a great smell, but is a wonderful band name...). The smell would still be there. It still wouldn't be a place you'd want to spend much time.

So, OK: if new carpet and air fresheners wouldn't do it, how about new paint? New paint always freshens a place up — no cracks, no stained trim, no scuff marks. Surely a couple gallons of Sherwin-Williams would do it, right?

You know it wouldn't, of course. Neither would nice new furniture, better window treatments, a state of the art home theater, or a top-notch security system. It wouldn't matter if you made the room into a library, game room, office, or bedroom. You could do a lot of work, much more than I did, and still get nowhere, for one painfully obvious reason; none of that would get anywhere near the source of the problem.

Of course, no one would be dumb enough to do that, would they?

Well, hold on.

I've seen a lot of people change churches over and over, jump from place to place, trying to find something that they can't even define: a feeling, a sense of belonging, a purpose. They chase that...whatever it is...from church to church, when maybe all along the problem has more to do with their expectations. But they're never going to find it if they never move from a preoccupation with receiving to a determination to give.

I've seen people identify their marriage problems as some variation of "my spouse doesn't make me happy." So they set about trying to "fix" their husband or wife, which generally has the effect of making things worse. Or go find a new one that's closer to their ideal. Thing is, while their attention is on fixing or replacing their spouse, they don't consider that the smell might be coming from something corrupt in their own heart.

You know what I'm talking about. You've seen self-righteous people who know every dark place on the internet demean "the gays." You've seen angry, bitter people attack immigrants as the source of all their problems, when their problems have nothing to do with that family down the street from Mexico, or Yemen, or Poland. You know people who laugh that their only drinking problem is that they can't get enough beer, and you know that there's something full of decay down deep inside them that they haven't seen or think they can ignore.

Maybe, just maybe, you yourself have been letting something rotten stay in the darkness of your heart of hearts for a long time now: anger, jealousy, hurt, grief, lust, selfishness, pride, greed. You've tried fixing the people around you. You've tried engineering your life to look just like you want it to. You've whitewashed your tombs. You've obsessively scrubbed the outside of your best china. But the stink is still there.

"First clean the inside," Jesus says. That doesn't work with china — please clean the outside of your dishes too — but it works with people because what's inside us tends to find its way outside until it poisons the air all around us.

Of course, if we could clean up our own insides we wouldn't be in this mess. Fortunately, that's not what Jesus is saying. The problem he's pointing at is our inability to even acknowledge that there might be something in our hearts, something that needs cleaning out down in the tangle of needs, wants, values, perspectives, and attitudes that make us who we are. We'd rather just leave the door shut. We need Jesus to do the cleaning, to write God's laws on our hearts, in the words of Jeremiah. But we have to be willing to "draw near to God with a sincere heart" so that can happen.

There's nothing we need to hide. Nothing we have to prove. Open that door. It might be kind of gross back there. It might take some work to clean it up. But it's only when we're willing to acknowledge where the real problem is that God will start to clean it up.

Trust me: you don't want to leave it there. It'll just smell worse.

Prayer Requests

New Requests and Updates (Please don't forget to give updates to Diana Allen.)

Paul LaScola, Patrick Odum's brother-in-law, is doing better.

Ongoing Concerns

Sister Tomasa Agosto needs our prayers due to her health issues.

Brother Baker, a resident at Winston Manor, has asked for general prayers for Booker T. Houser and family, the Lotts, the Burns, the Taylors, and the Schafers.

Don Ballarini asks that we pray for his brother, Ronald, who is suffering from dementia and other health problems.

Hillary Beata asks that we keep Rachel, a member of her parent's church, in our prayers. She is a young mother who was just diagnosed with cancer.

Wilma Brumley is grieving the loss of her son, Daniel.

Elida Cano is still fighting cancer.

Richard Cooper has asked that we continue praying for the brethren in Guinea.

Jennifer Duff's sister, Judy Duff, is still fighting cancer. Jennifer's mother also has some health concerns.

Carlos Estrada's friend, Madeline Badea, has a degenerative bone disease.

Barbara Foucher's cousin, Jonathan Williams, has been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis.

Maria Fuentes, who lives at Winston Manor, is dealing with severe pain in her back and side.

Jan Gunter, Jim's wife, needs some radiation therapy.

Darrell Hutchens has moved to Manteno Veterans' Home, Room 423 West, One Veterans Drive, Manteno, IL 60959. Cards are appreciated and visits are welcome.

Irma Rae from Winston Manor asks that we pray for issues in her life.

Cathy Littrell's aunt, Diane Shabbing, has colon cancer.

Perry Littrell's brother-in-law, Joel Dallas, has three bulging disks in his back.

Perry Littrell asks us to pray for Gilliane Moore, the sister of a friend of his who was in a car accident. Her son, Kohen, suffered skull fractures and brain trauma in the accident. Gilliane is in danger of losing an arm.

Martha Lucunza, a dear friend of Susan Thrasher's, is going through treatments for bone cancer.

Mary Lynn, friend of a resident at the Oak Park Nursing Home, has a leg that needs healing.

Maria from Winston Manor asks that we pray for her daughter and granddaughter.

Linda McNeal is coping with dizziness and other medical issues.

Linda McNeal's husband has some health problems.

Linda McNeal's nephew, David, is beginning chemo for lung cancer.

Maria McNeal, Linda's mother-in-law, broke her hip.

Jay Min asks for prayers regarding his mother's diabetes.

Wayne Mitchell asks that we pray for an improved relationship with his son, Myles.

Gus Ramirez, a friend of the Thrasher family, has been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Marge Reavis' sister has been diagnosed with cancer.

Anabel Rice is dealing with lupus.

Celeste Rucker's father, *Bob Konczal*, is struggling with chronic pain due to scoliosis and arthritis in the lower spine and hip.

Tom Rucker's aunt, *Sally Rucker-Dobbs*, is recovering from a recent stroke.

Tom Rucker's best friend's niece, *Katie Fearer*, has a large mass in her shoulder, lungs, and spine, and is waiting to be admitted to a cancer center in Houston. Her father, *Zane*, was in a bicycle accident and has multiple injuries, which has left him with no use of his arms. Please keep Katie, Zane, and their family in your prayers during this very difficult time.

Vicki Sebela, Laura Odum's cousin, is still recovering from eye surgery, diabetic retinopathy, and breast cancer.

Herb Sherrod, a former member at Northwest, is in the process of obtaining a new kidney so he can go off dialysis.

Mary Smith's cousin, Jim Thompson, fell and broke his hip during physical therapy. Jim's brother, Stan Thompson, had a stroke recently.

Donna Stover, a former Northwest member, is suffering from kidney disease.

Barbara Thomas and Dolores, both from the Oak Park Nursing Home, ask for prayers for improved health.

Mike Thrasher needs prayers for continued guidance and direction in his life and with his Tourette's and OCD.

Celina Turman asks that we pray for her mother, who has been in the hospital for blood pressure.

Liz Van-Klingerin/Sumner, Clarence Thrasher's sister, has a leaky aortic valve and may need surgery.

Johnny Vera asks for prayers for his family, health, and relationship problems.

Cynthia Webster, Barbara Foucher's sister, is in rehab recovering from a coronary. She is also dealing with kidney and immune system problems brought on by lupus.

Daniel Williamson, Miriam Williamson's husband, needs our prayer for recovery from his health problems.

Willie, a resident of the Winston Manor Nursing Home, has cataracts and glaucoma.

Don Wood's sister-in-law, Jeanette Wood, has stage 4 lung cancer and is undergoing radiation treatments.

September 16, 2018