

# NATIONAL X PRESS

THE NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

NOV/DEC 2009 | VOL. 12

## SUNDAY SERMON SERIES

Worship  
at 8, 9:15, and 11 a.m.

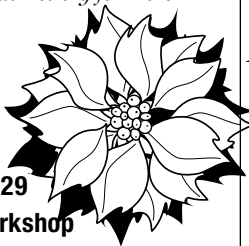
*The Story Before the Grand Story:  
A Christian Understanding of the Old Testament*

**November 8**  
"Wars and Rumors of Wars"  
Rev. Earl Palmer

**November 15**  
"A People of Song"  
Dr. Doug Learned

**November 22**  
"Christ the King"  
"A City Prepared for a New King"  
Rev. Earl Palmer

*For a complete schedule of Advent and Christmas worship services, please see page 2. Check our web site, [www.NationalPres.org](http://www.NationalPres.org) for more information.*



**November 29**  
Advent Workshop  
Pizza, fun, worship, and Advent crafts for the whole family

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### DEADLINES

**January/February:** December 1

**March/April:** February 1

**May/June:** April 1

**July/August:** June 1

**September/October:** August 1

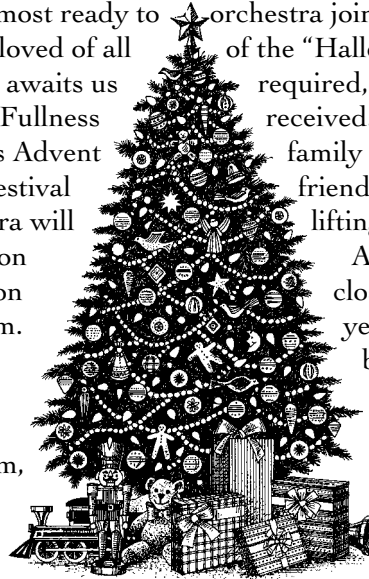
**November/December:** October 1

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## What's under the Tree?

*Music at National Presents Christmas Music for All to Enjoy*

Two musical gifts are already under our NPC Christmas tree, almost ready to be unwrapped! The most beloved of all choral works the world over awaits us in a package labeled "In the Fullness of Time: Celebrating Christ's Advent in Handel's *Messiah*." Our Festival Choir, Soloists, and Orchestra will perform the Christmas portion of this beloved masterwork on Sunday, December 6 at 5 p.m. "After a few years lying fallow, last year's Festival Choir effort was a blessed event," says Michael Denham, NPC's Director of Music, "with nearly 100 singers raising their hearts and voices to God and all of us." The concert will conclude with choir, congregation and orchestra joining together in a reprisal of the "Hallelujah" chorus. No tickets are required, but a freewill offering will be received. So come and bring your family and fifty of your closest friends for an exhilarating and uplifting evening.



Another present awaits us even closer to Christmas, but this year wrapped with a new ribbon. *Darkness to Dawn*, NPC's Sixty-Ninth Annual Candlelight Christmas Worship will this year be part of one expanded festival service at 10 a.m. Sunday, December 20. Tradition

and innovation will intertwine beautiful

*Continued on page 3*

## The Joy of Reaching Out around the World

*Alternative Gifts Christmas Market Shares Jesus' Love*

*By Keith Patman, NPC Elder*

One of our cherished Christmas traditions at NPC is the Alternative Gifts Christmas Market (AGCM), where we have the opportunity to contribute to mission projects in the name of those on our own gift lists, as our Christmas presents to those friends and loved ones. In doing this, we share with them the joy of reaching out around the world in response to the love God showed in sending the Lord Jesus, to proclaim the good news of eternal life, and to offer help to people in the struggles of this life.

This year's AGCM features partnerships with 36 organizations, including two long-standing AGCM favorites fitting for Christmas—Crèche and the Bethlehem Bible College. Also known as the Holy Family Children's Home, Crèche is located in the heart of Old Town Bethlehem, a

short walk from the birthplace of Jesus. In recent years NPC members have visited the Crèche to help carry out its mission to serve and protect abandoned children. One NPC family even traveled to Bethlehem to adopt their daughter from the Crèche. Nearby, Bethle-



Last year, AGCM supported the distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets in the village of Obiré, Burkina Faso.

*Continued on page 3*

# Advent & Christmas

## Jesus Christ: The Only New Thing

### Worship on Sunday Mornings

at 8 a.m., Chapel, and at 9 and 11 a.m., Sanctuary  
Rev. Earl Palmer, Preaching Pastor-in-Residence

*“Never be ashamed of Jesus Christ, or of his gospel... It is the only new thing in the world. All else is as old as the hills, even the latest vaccine, or the latest bomb. Only the eternal, only that which is the same yesterday, today, and forever is really new. Aim, therefore, always at that which is at once eternal, universal, personal, concrete.”*

Charles Habib Malek

**NOV 29** First Sunday in Advent  
Jesus Christ: The Only New Thing  
Rev. Eunice McGarrahan

**DEC 6** Second Sunday in Advent:  
Jesus Christ: Universal  
Rev. Earl Palmer

**DEC 13** Third Sunday in Advent  
Jesus Christ: Personal  
Rev. Earl Palmer

**DEC 27** First Sunday after Christmas  
??????  
Rev. Eunice McGarrahan

**DEC 20** Candlelight Christmas Worship  
a single festival service at 10 a.m.  
Lessons and Carols within the  
elements of worship  
First Service at 8:45 a.m.  
Jesus Christ: Eternal  
Rev. Earl Palmer

**DEC 24** Christmas Eve  
Family Nativity Service  
at 5 p.m.  
Candlelight Communion Services  
at 8 and 11 p.m.  
Jesus Christ: Concrete  
Dr. Douglas Learned

## Songs We Know by Heart

### Communion Vespers on Wednesday Evenings

at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary  
Buffet Dinner in Stone Hall, 5:30 to 6:45 p.m.

*The shepherds sing, and shall I silent be? My God, no hymn for thee?*

*My soul's a shepherd too, a flock it feeds of thoughts, and words, and deeds;*

*The pasture is thy word, the stream thy grace enriching all the place.*

*Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers out-sing the daylight hours.*

George Herbert, 1593-1633

**DEC 2** First Vespers in Advent  
Joy to the World!  
Dr. Douglas Learned

**DEC 9** Second Vespers in Advent  
The First Nowell  
Rev. Earl Palmer

**DEC 16** Third Vespers in Advent  
O Little Town of Bethlehem  
Rev. Earl Palmer

# Alternative Gifts Christmas Market

*Continued from page 1*

hem Bible College trains Palestinian young people to serve the minority Christian community in the Holy Land.

All AGCM partners have connections with members of NPC. Howard Tucker-Frost, this year's AGCM

coordinator, says that member-initiated relationships are an important part of outreach at NPC. "The Outreach Pillar has been strategizing for several years how to get more NPC members involved in missions," says Frost. "Requiring AGCM ap-

plications to be submitted by NPC members is one of these." An example is A Brighter Tomorrow for Africa Foundation. In 2008, NPC member Laura Wilson introduced the founder, Sarah Armstrong, to our MOMS group. After hearing Sarah's



In past years, AGCM has helped save African villagers from cyclical famines through support of a locally run cereal bank.

inspirational story of leaving the corporate world to start the foundation, the MOMS group decided to support the foundation in their own fund raising endeavors. Similarly, NPC member Agus Wong built relationships with YAKKUM Rehabilitation Center

and the Bina Kasih Foundation, Christian outreaches in his homeland of Indonesia.

In addition to our gifts at Christmas to promote God's work

through these organizations, our relationships with them engage our members in service. NPC members have traveled in recent years to join hands with our Christian brothers and sisters of Unsung Heroes in South Africa, Foundation for Peace in Kenya, McGilvary College of Divinity in Thailand, and The Marriage Ministry in Moldova, to name a few. Many more of our members participate on a regular basis in God's work in our city through Capital Interfaith Hospitality Network, Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place, and Unique Learning Center.

In fact, some of our members are involved full-time in ministries represented in this year's AGCM. John Bernbaum is founder and president of the Russian-American Institute (formerly Russian American Christian University) in Moscow. Peggy McCracken serves under Campus Crusade for Christ in outreach to diplomats and their families from around the world at the Christian Embassy here in Washington. NPC members Dileni Gunewardena and Suresh de Mel were nurtured in faith by Fellowship of Christian University Students (FOCUS) during their



A young man happily displays the new artificial leg he has just received from the Yakkum Rehabilitation Center.

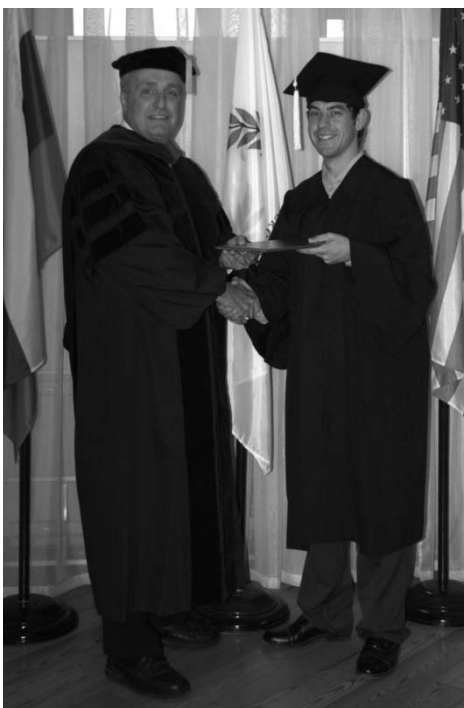
undergraduate years in Sri Lanka. Since their return to Sri Lanka from the Washington area in the late 1990s, they have served on FOCUS' governing council and supported this ministry by speaking at student camps and monthly meetings, leading Bible studies and opening their home to students.

Mission at NPC is for all of us! You are encouraged to be involved in what God is doing around the world by participating in AGCM this year. Learn more about this and year-round opportunities to serve by contacting our Outreach office at 202-537-7483 or by visiting the Outreach pages, under "Serve" on our web site: [www.NationalPres.org](http://www.NationalPres.org).

## Christmas Music

*Continued from page 1*

and beloved lessons and carols with familiar patterns of our regular worship. Solemn candlelight procession, brilliant brass, timpani, and organ, delicate harp, violin and bells - all joining to heighten the proclamation of God's Word, and our celebration of that moment in history when, in the face of our only Savior, darkness itself fell into the dawn of love's light. Come and see what lies ahead in Bethlehem!



John Bernbaum, President, Russian-American Institute, confers a diploma upon a recent graduate.

# Notes on Stewardship

## *Don't Forget Stewardship Sunday on November 15, plus some useful tips*

by David Daniels, NPC Elder

This year is turning out to be a very difficult year for many. The media has chronicled the nation's economic woes in graphic detail throughout the year, many of us have friends or loved ones who have lost jobs or homes, and, though the stock market has rebounded somewhat from its lows in March, most of us still have considerably fewer resources now than we had a few years ago.



NPC elder David Daniels

However, God is good, and his people have been faithful! Although giving is still somewhat behind our budget for the year, our financial situation is not nearly as dire as some area churches. Because of the foresight and generous provisioning of our spiritual ancestors at NPC, we owe no mortgage debt on our magnificent Nebraska Avenue complex. We have even been able to use our parking lot to increase revenue significantly this year. The NPC Session and staff have made a concerted and successful effort to contain costs. Hiring a permanent Director of Finance this year is putting us in a stronger position for fiscal stewardship going forward.

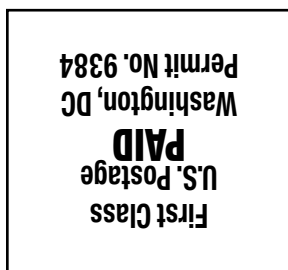
Now, as we approach the end of the year, it is time to turn our attention to planning for the year ahead. Corporately, we are preparing a budget that sustains the good ministries of NPC while balancing financial responsibility. Individually, I would ask you to consider prayerfully how God would have you invest your time and your financial resources in the church's ministries in 2010. We have designated November 15 as Stewardship Sunday, when we will have an opportunity

to declare our faith giving commitment for the upcoming year during the morning offering. You should receive a letter in the mail this week with an accompanying pledge card. You may return your completed cards in the offering plate during worship on November 15 or by mail. The Finance Office will use those pledges to provide individualized quarterly statements for your records.

One way I have found helpful to maintain consistent faith giving habits is to incorporate my faith giving in my normal monthly budgeting process. Many of us are increasingly turning to online resources to schedule periodic recurring financial transactions. I pay nearly all my bills online through my bank's online bill pay service. Why not schedule faith giving that way as well? For several years I have used Paypal, which I was able to set up easily from NPC's web site and which helps me as a traveler who is sometimes away on Sundays. That way, I can easily stay current with my faith giving commitment whether I am in town or away for any given Sunday. (I even get credit card reward points for my faith giving, since I have Paypal connected to my credit card.)

The only drawback to online faith giving is that it can replace the physical act of giving during worship. Those of us in the chancel choir are usually singing during the offering and do not have the opportunity to place a giving envelope into the offering plate during worship anyway. However, if one would like to supplement an electronic gift with a physical manifestation of that faith gift during worship, I would encourage putting a note of dedication in the offering plate as it is passed to you.

On behalf of NPC's Session, I want to thank you for your past generosity and ask you to pray about how you will give in the coming year.



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