

# koinonia

March 2023

## A Note of Thankfulness From Pastor Brandon

“I will thank the Lord with all my heart; I will declare all your wondrous works. I will rejoice and boast about you; I will sing about your name, Most High.” – Psalm 9:1-2

It is with a thankful heart that I write this month’s Koinonia. This is not different from the others I have written, but my heart is full as I have much to be thankful for. This month’s article will be more of a recap of the past season so that we have it written out for record and so that I can share my heart regarding our church and where we stand currently.

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In August of 2020, I stood before our church, sharing with my family that Jessica and I had been in prayer and felt that the Lord wanted us to prepare to take the lead role at a church. At the time, it looked as if that path forward would lead us away from our church home. Jessica grew up in this church and I had been here almost 20 years at that point. We asked our church to pray with us through that season because we wanted our church family involved in such a large decision. I actually spoke with a couple of churches and even made it to the last round of interviews with one. All that we knew was that we wanted to be where the Lord wanted us to be. Several months later we realized that Pastor Aaron would be less available to the body as he continued his training for nursing home administration. It was immediately clear that we could not leave our church family during this season and would need to be here and available for ministry. I then put my search on hold, focusing on our church body. We weren’t sure how long that season would last but knew that we were called to serve Northside at the present and that we needed to take care of family first.

In this season of serving family, it became clear to Jessica and me that our hearts were solidly knit here with Northside. It also became evident to our elders at this time that changes would need to be made to ensure that our body had ministry available and that day-to-day tasks and ministry were taken care of. In the summer of 2021, the elders agreed that I would be taking on more at the church to help Pastor Aaron as he was now in the practical phase of his training at the nursing home. At our elder’s retreat in January of 2022, the elders agreed that, since Pastor Aaron had been offered and accepted a job as a nursing home administrator in Longview, that another change would need to take place. In February of 2022, Pastor Aaron and I began to co-pastor the church, with me taking on the day-to-day ministry and us partnering together re-



garding the ministry of our church. This time was such a blessing, as the Lord continued to strengthen my love for our church body in a way that was different than anything I had previously experienced.

We spent the next year praying together about what the Lord wanted for our church body. I spent that year praying that God would equip me to fulfill what was needed here. As just about everyone should know at this point, on February 12th of this year, the elders presented to the body that I would be stepping into the lead pastor role solely as Pastor Aaron stepped away from his role as pastor. I want to first express my deep gratitude for the 22 years of pastoral ministry given to our church by Pastor Aaron. That time was given on top of years serving our church and school in youth ministry and as principal of NCA. We have been blessed in the time of his leadership and I was blessed to come into the church during this time. Under his leadership, I have grown as a man, Christ-follower, husband, and minister. I am so thankful to have served alongside him for all these years and am grateful that he stands with us still as a member and elder of the church. I know that many others have had a similar experience, making this transition an emotional one. I promise to pray for you in this time and hope that you will pray for me as we discover what this new season looks like together. I am blessed to be able to serve my family here at Northside and pray that we can walk forward together into this next season in the Lord's strength and grace. I am trusting the Lord with our future as a church, and I would ask that you pray for our church as we seek His will together. I hope that you feel as if you can speak with me and the elders about this transition and anything else you may be experiencing in this season. I, along with Jessica, Ashlynn, and Kai are so very blessed to call you family and Northside our home. Please know that we love you, are here for you, and pray for you. I am excited to see what the Lord has in store for us in the years to come! Let's trust the Lord together, acknowledging Him in all we do, and we will see Him lead us to where He wants us to be!

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight." - Proverbs 3:5-6

## Upcoming Events:

**Family Life Event  
- April 16th**

**Ministry Leader Meeting -  
April 23rd**

**NCC's 62nd Anniversary  
Celebration - May 7th**

## A Word on Worship

From Pastor Scott

This month's word on worship comes from Shane Barnard, author of the song You've Already Won. In this article he shares some perspective concerning spiritual realities we often forget. I hope you enjoy it.

Things I often forget:

I am in the middle of a war.

I am a foreigner, an exile, a citizen of a much better Country. I am not at home here.

What's hard to forget—and easy to admit—is that I am easily discouraged and, at times, would rather pretend the war isn't going on. Then, I could zone out and coast through these heavy and sometimes impossible days.

Are you like me? Do you feel like this broken world beats you into submission? Are you having difficulty pushing through the dark clouds of discouragement today?

Here's some good news: if you have received the free gift of God's love in His Son Jesus Christ, Who loved you and gave Himself for you--if you are a daughter or a son of the Most High...

**YOUR FUTURE IS REALLY BRIGHT!**

You may say, "Lord! What are you doing? I don't like it! It doesn't feel right; I don't understand it! God, I don't know what you are doing, but... I know what you've done. And that's enough."

Take a minute right in the middle of your circumstance and ponder anew all He has done for you. Say with me:

"You have purchased me. You pulled me out of the domain of darkness into the Kingdom of Your beloved Son. You adopted me into the family of God. You redeemed me by the blood of the Lamb, and by that blood, forgave me of all my sin and reconciled me to God. But you didn't just forgive my sin; You became sin on my behalf so that I might now have Your life, Jesus! Your perfect record is now my perfect record, and I am free to live for You. You have given me Your Holy Spirit as a Helper, a guide, and a seal of Your work of saving me. You made me an heir of God, a co-heir with Christ Jesus, and everything in Him is mine!" He has done SO much more for us, but before this turns into a novel, let's look to the future:

Brothers, Sisters--We know how the story ends! There is future grace available for us today. Jesus is coming back soon to make it all right and to usher us into forever, where we will see John's revelation:

"a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:1-4

So I say again: your future is bright. Our future is bright. And Jesus promises to be everything you need today in the in-between. But make no mistake; here in the in-between, we ARE in a battle! Jesus defeated sin, hell, and Satan on the cross when He said, "It is finished," but He has left us here to fight in the strength of what He has done and the assurance of what He is coming to do.

So, let's go!

Father, help us fight well and be free in the strength that you provide!

## NCA Update

As the calendar turns to March and Spring Break is upon us, I want to take a moment to share what we see on a daily basis at Northside Christian Academy. Every day we see students learning and growing. Our students are not just learning about God's creation and order in the world around us. They are being introduced to the One who formed the world and formed them. Our students are not just learning about the events of history. They are seeing God at work throughout time to accomplish His will and purposes. Our students are not just learning language and communication skills. They are hearing the greatest story ever told and the importance of being able to share it well.

Thank you for your prayers and support for this ministry. March marks the opening of re-enrollment for the 2023–2024 academic year. We will begin accepting new enrollments in April. Please pray that God will send us partnering families that share our vision of discipleship through Christian Education.

## New Series

We are very excited about the new series we are starting on Sunday Mornings. We will be going through the book of Acts and looking at how God's Spirit accomplished God's will through God's People. There are reading plans available on the information tables and the Northside App so that you can stay up to date with where we are in the series. Starting March 19th, there will also be a study guide available on the app called, "Going Deeper." This will provide you with some questions to answer throughout the week as you follow the reading plan, as well as links to commentary that can supplement your study. Our Wednesday night small groups will be discussing the previous Sunday's message and provide you the opportunity to share what you are studying on your own. This is sure to be a blessing to our body! We hope that those able will go deeper together with us!

## Giving Update

It is with a full heart that I write this month's giving update. We have walked a path over the last several months that has tested our faith and resolve to trust in the Lord. In last month's Koinonia article, I encouraged us all to walk forward with the understanding that God provides and to live as if we believe that; not simply as if we hope that. Steps of faith such as this typically come under the category of "more easily said than done." Our financial reports over the last month have continued to reflect God's faithfulness to us and the work He is doing through Northside. I am happy to report that, over the last several weeks, we have seen giving increase and ground be made up from our lack through God's provision of faithful givers. God is not neglecting the work of the church but continues to send partners who generously and faithfully give. I am thankful and encouraged to be a part of what the Lord is doing here. Please pray that faithful givers continue to partner with us in ministry and pray that the Lord places blessings in the hands of our body to continue to give from. We will continue to faithfully follow the leading of the Lord in each area of ministry and look

to see mighty things come from His faithful hands. Matt Redman wrote the song “Blessed Be Your Name” with a lyric that resonates well for me in this season and I pray that it does so for you as well.

Every blessing You pour out, I’ll turn back to praise.

Let’s do the same here. Let’s be a people who are faithful to not only give and hope but to praise the Lord openly for His provision, returning praise for what He has given us and what He is doing in us!

–Pastor Brandon

The chart below reflects giving through the month of February. If you have any questions about giving or finances, feel free to call the church office and we’ll make time to discuss any thoughts or concerns you may have. (903) 693-6366

