



BELONGING *at* NORTHLAND

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“We don’t go to church; We are the church.”

— ERNEST SOUTHCOTT

We all need to belong — somewhere and to someone. The need to belong is so strong it could more accurately be called a longing. Have you ever wondered where that longing comes from? Our deepest need to belong will only be filled when we belong to Christ and do as He did — give our lives in service to others.

Once we believe in Christ and belong to Him, we also belong to each other as the body of Christ. The body of Christ consists of all believers throughout all of time. It is a community of faith made up of those individuals who profess Jesus as Lord and who have His transforming Spirit at work in their lives. His church is His representative on earth and a change agent in the world. As the body of Christ, we are to give our very lives in service to others, taking the hope of Christ to the world.

Belonging to the body of Christ is a natural result of belonging to Jesus Christ Himself. But belonging to a local church is a decision. It is like joining a family through marriage. Just as newborn babies are placed in the loving arms of a family, so believers are to be loved, nourished, and challenged by a family — not family as an idea, but family as individual, intimate relatives. It is important for you to know the family you are joining.

Through the following pages, you will come to know the family of Northland more fully. Before you decide to commit to Northland as your local church, please consider what we believe and the role God has called us to play in the world. It is our hope that you will join us in fulfilling our mission and vision.

“No new Christian is born in a vacuum. He is delivered into the fellowship of the church. He is baptized by the one Spirit into the body of Christ. He joins the society of the saints.”

— ARTHUR SKEVINGTON WOOD

OUR IDENTITY

Just as God has uniquely created each individual, designing within each one the potential to contribute something precious to the lives of others, so too God has created diversity in His kingdom so that each congregation and Christian organization will make a unique contribution to the world.

Our Purpose: Why we are here

From its inception in 1972, Northland has been unwavering in its purpose:

To bring people to maturity in Christ.

Our Vision: What we see

A vision is a clear mental picture of a preferable future. It sees the future through the eyes of faith. It shares the perspective of the biblical writer when he wrote the following words: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1, NASB).

Northland’s vision is to see people coming to Christ and to be transformed together as we link locally and globally to worship and serve everywhere, every day.

Our Mission: What we do

Respond to God for the benefit of others.

At Northland, we believe God’s call to us as a body of believers is to respond to Him for the benefit of others. There are countless ways that one can respond to God’s grace and goodness. We have identified the following ways that we, as a church, regularly want to respond together:

- **Worshiping God — John 4:23**
Glorify God for Who He is and what He has done.
- **Reading the Bible — Jeremiah 1:12**
Study God’s message to you often.
- **Sharing our stories — 1 Peter 3:15**
Tell others what God is doing in your life.

- **Being in community — John 13:35**
Foster environments for relationship.
- **Praying — 1 Peter 3:12**
Engage in conversation with God.
- **Serving others — Matthew 20:28**
Meet the needs of the people around you.
- **Living generously — Matthew 6:21**
Give what God's given you.

We believe that as we respond to God together we will be transformed into the image of Christ.

OUR INFLUENCE

“Bringing people to maturity in Christ” is the distinct purpose of Northland, A Church Distributed. It is our purpose at Longwood; it is our purpose in each distributed site gathering, and also for those who worship with us each weekend via live, interactive online worship. It is our motivation as we reach out into our neighborhoods, and it is what drives us as we connect with other believers around the world.

We understand that the process of spiritual maturity takes place when we give to others as freely as we have received. The love and grace of God, which we respond to first through salvation, becomes the source and supply from which we reach out to bless others. Northland seeks to give away what God has given us, as a body. We see all our relationships and circumstances as opportunities for generosity, service and ministry.

Personal Influence

We challenge our members to respond to God everywhere, every day. In order to assist our congregation in doing this, our leadership sees its role as creating environments for ministry. Our members are encouraged to invest for the kingdom in their neighborhoods, schools, offices, and homes — rather than inside the church walls.

OUR STRUCTURE

The body of Christ, all the believers across all of time, is a united body, but it is a diverse body. We acknowledge that there are many possible approaches to church structure, as the Scriptures provide guiding biblical principles rather than definitive methodologies.

Northland is not part of a denomination. It is a distributed church, and as such, has many partnerships around the world. It works as a catalyst for relationship between like-minded ministries. Rather than focusing on the

separation that non-essential doctrinal distinctives can create, Northland chooses to focus on the unity that can be found in the shared essential beliefs of Christianity.

As a local church, we were originally conceived, and continue today, as an elder-led congregation. Our elders exercise spiritual authority for our congregation out of a heart of servanthood, not coercion. Although Northland's form of government is an eldership, this does not mean that all decisions or ministries are the direct responsibility of the elders. Rather, Northland affirms that each Christian is a member of the "priesthood of all believers"¹ and is responsible to faithfully utilize individual Spirit-empowered giftedness for ministry².

¹1 Peter 2:9; ²1 Peter 4:10

Our internal leadership structure is evolving as we expand our understanding of what it means to be a distributed church, as well as a local congregation. The following is a brief overview of the various roles of servant leadership at Northland.

Governing Elders

The role of elder includes overseeing the spiritual life and well-being of local church members, exercising governing authority for the church in all its distributed expressions, and maintaining the biblical faithfulness of all church ministries. Northland's Elder Board is the highest governing authority of this church, approving the general policies and direction for the church, as well as approving and overseeing the annual budget. Governing elders are ordained by the church; they serve an initial term of six years. The governing board of elders normally is composed of not less than five or more than nine men.

Elders

Nine governing elders could not personally equip and encourage all the ministries that emanate from Northland. Therefore, non-governing elders are trained, assigned to specific areas of ministry and then are distributed throughout our local body, the greater Orlando area, or around the global. Elders understand their roles as overseers of specific ministries and as equippers of leaders. Each of these functions are carried out through the context of personal relationship.

Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor has the authority to carry out the elders' direction for the church. He provides vision and leadership for the church and is the primary preaching pastor for our congregation. He participates on a Executive Team that oversees daily operations, including both the ministries and financial resources, of the church.

Pastors

The role of pastor is to shepherd the congregation and enhance the spiritual life and growth of the church. Pastors work together with the Executive Team to coordinate efforts and shape the ways the mission of the church is carried forward as they plan, staff, and supervise their own specific areas of ministry. Northland's pastors are a special category of elder, having input but no vote on matters of governance.

Executive Team

Northland's Executive Team is responsible for aligning the staff and congregation to accomplish the mission of the church. While these team members make regular reports to the elders, they have the authority to make operational decisions that do not have to wait for governing elder approval. The Executive Team can also appoint ad hoc teams to carry out specific ministry tasks and develop specific recommendations to be presented to the elders. As we see in the early church (Acts 6), gifted leaders are assigned to make appropriate arrangements for the needs of people so that the ministry of the Word and prayer can be continually prioritized.

Ministers

The role of Minister at Northland fulfills the responsibilities described by deacons in the Scriptures. Ministers support and promote the ministry of the Word, lead various ministries of the church, care for members of the congregation, and perform sacerdotal functions. Men and women are commissioned as Ministers by the church.

Staff

As Northland sees its members as ministers, it is the job of the staff (as well as the executive team, pastors, and elders) to provide and support environments for ministry.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;

By Whom all things were made; Who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;

And He shall come again with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end. And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; Who spoke by the prophets;

And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

BASIC BELIEFS

Our Basic Beliefs are the doctrinal statements upon which Northland is founded, bases its ministries, and which each member affirms. These foundational beliefs are the basic doctrines upon which the church universal agrees, thereby providing a basis for unity between diverse congregations within the distributed church.

The Bible

We believe the Scripture to be the true, reliable, authoritative Word of God. Both Old and New Testaments are God-breathed and inerrant in their original texts, and are the Christian's final authority in faith and conduct.

God-breathed — God guided human authors so that they composed and recorded His message without error.

Authoritative — The words of the Bible are the words of God in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey the Bible is to disbelieve or disobey God.

Infallible — The Bible will not lead us astray in matters of faith and practice.

Inerrant — Scripture in the original manuscripts is accurate and factual. It does not contradict history, science, or itself.

Therefore, we can trust that the Bible accurately communicates God's message to us.

2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21

God

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is three Persons. Each Person is fully God. There is one God¹.

Infinitely perfect — God has no bounds or limits. Since there is no aspect of time, space, or intensity in which God is not perfect, He is the standard against which all else is measured.

Eternally existing — God exists endlessly. He had no beginning, and He has no ending. No action or person caused God's existence.

Therefore, God is perfect and exists as three Persons while remaining one inseparable God.

¹Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, pg. 231; Matthew 3:16-17;

2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2

Man

We believe that man was created in the image of God¹ but that he sinned, incurring not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God, and which is inherited by every member of Adam's race².

We believe that man is subject to the power of the devil and has within himself no possible means of recovery or salvation³.

Image of God — People have characteristics that resemble the character of God.

Adam's race — All humankind (men and women).

Devil — Satan is the originator of evil and the opposer of God and God's good works.

Therefore, while God created us for relationship, our sin spoils the possibility of intimacy with God and separates us from God.

¹Genesis 1:26-27; ²Hebrews 9:27a; ¹Corinthians 15:22a, Romans 3:23; 6:23; ³Romans 3:9-12, 19-20

Sin

"Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature" (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*). We believe that as a result of Adam's fall, we are born depraved, with a sin nature.

Therefore, until we come to Christ, sin is not just what we do; it is who we are.

The Person and Work of Christ

We believe by miracle of the virgin birth¹ that the Lord Jesus Christ, eternal Son of God, became man² without ceasing to be God in order to reveal God and redeem man³; that He died as the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins, and arose bodily from the dead for our justification; and that He is now exalted at the right hand of God, Head of the Church, and Lord in the individual believer, fulfilling His ministry as our Great High Priest and Advocate.

Virgin birth — Jesus had a human mother and divine Father.

Redeem — To release by paying a ransom price. We are released from our tendency toward sin, by the payment of Christ's blood, to a new life of freedom and dedication to the One who bought our freedom.

Substitutionary sacrifice — Christ suffered and died in our place so that we no longer face the penalty of our sin.

Justification — God declares righteous ("not guilty") those who declare their faith in Christ.

Therefore Christ is fully God, our Savior and Lord.

¹Matthew 1:20; ²Luke 1:35; ²Luke 2:7, 40, 52; ³John 1:1-16, 29-34

The Means of Salvation

We believe that because of our sin, we deserve only punishment. Salvation from the guilt and condemnation of sin¹ is possible only by grace alone through faith alone². It cannot be gained by good resolutions, sincere efforts, or submission to the rules, regulations, or ordinances of any church³,

but is freely bestowed on all who put their faith in Christ and trust in the work which Christ accomplished on the cross of Calvary⁴. All who so trust the Savior pass from death unto life⁵, are forgiven of their sins⁶, are accepted by the Father, and are born into His family⁷ by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit⁸ through the Word of God⁹.

Grace — The unmerited favor of God.

Calvary — The site of Jesus' crucifixion. Calvary is Latin for "skull." It is also referred to in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke as Golgotha, which is an Aramaic word also meaning "skull."

Therefore our salvation is based on Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection. It is not determined by what we do but by our response to what God has done for us.

¹Romans 3:23; ²Romans 6:23; ³Ephesians 2:8-9; ⁴Romans 5:8; ¹ Peter 3:18; ⁵John 3:16; ⁶Romans 10:9-10; ⁷John 1:12; ⁸Titus 3:5; ⁹1 Peter 1:23

The Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of sin¹, regenerates the believing sinner², and at conversion, baptizes him into the church, which is the body of Christ³. We believe that He indwells⁴, guides⁵, instructs⁶ and empowers the believer for godly living and service⁷, and that He seals and keeps him until the Lord comes⁸. We believe that He bestows spiritual gifts on each one. We believe that Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to each new believer, so that each one has a manifestation of the power of Christ through which His Spirit works. It is this connection to the Spirit that motivates each follower for service.⁹ The practice of any gift in any gathered body shall be in keeping with the Scriptures.

Regenerates — Act of rebirth. God gives new life to the believer. He forgives our sins and gives us a fresh start.

Conversion — Literally means "changing." It is the process and point at which the believer accepts God's gift of salvation.

Indwells — Dwells within.

Seals — As both a sign of ownership and a sign of security.

For example, branding cattle is an ownership sign. Sealing a letter with wax is a security sign.

Bestows — Gives.

Spiritual gifts — Motivations, abilities, and opportunities given to each believer for the benefit of the body of Christ and the world.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit is our Provision and Guide in developing intimate relationships with God and others. At the point of salvation, the Holy Spirit enters the believer and begins a lifelong process of transformation toward Christlikeness.

¹John 16:8-11; ²1 Corinthians 6:11; ³Titus 3:5-7; ⁴Ephesians 4:4-6; ⁵1 John

4:13; ⁵Galatians 5:16-26; ⁶John 14:26; 16:13; ⁷Acts 1:8; ⁸2 Corinthians 1:21-22; ⁹1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Romans 12:4-8

// FOR MORE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT:

www.northlandchurch.net

Security, Assurance, and Responsibility

We believe that all the saved, those in whom God has accomplished His transforming work of grace, are kept by His power and are thus secure in Christ forever.¹ It is their privilege to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation². However, this assurance must not be the occasion for sin, for God in holiness cannot tolerate persistent sin in His children, and in infinite love He corrects them.³ True faith in Christ is expressed by a transformed life.⁴

Security — The assurance that the presence and work of God in the believer's life will remain forever.

Therefore, believers are assured that their faith in Christ will remain secure; however, they should never use this assurance as a reason for ungodly behavior.

¹John 10:27-29; ²1 John 5:13; Romans 8:35-39; ³Hebrews 12:6;
⁴Matthew 7:20; James 2:20

Our Calling

We believe that each believer is called with a holy calling to live not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. The flesh (our natural desire), which in this life is never fully eradicated, must be kept by the Spirit (through our walk of faith), constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence in our lives, to the dishonor of our Lord.

Holy — Separated from all that is unclean and evil and set apart for service.

Walk — The believer's journey toward spiritual maturity (Christlikeness).

Therefore, Christians are called to a life of obedience to God by hearing and obeying God's Word through the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives within them.

Romans 8:1-4, 12-14; Galatians 5:16-25

The Church

We believe that the true church is composed of all who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and that those who are members of the true church will be eligible for membership in the local church. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are to be observed by the church during the present age. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are acts of

obedience to the Lord. Participation in them, though, is not to be regarded in any sense as a means of salvation.

Baptism — A sign of commitment to and identification with Christ.

Lord's Supper — Communion, the Eucharist, or the Lord's Table. It is a collective celebration of what Christ has done for His Church.

Therefore, the church is a covenant community of believers who celebrate together their shared life in Christ.

Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27; Hebrews 10:23-24; Luke 22:19-20;

Acts 8:30-38

The Second Coming

We believe in the personal, imminent Second Coming of our Lord; we believe that this blessed hope has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.

Imminent — Literally means "near." Here, it means "possibly near" since it could happen at any moment but we do not know which moment.

Second Coming — Refers to the sudden, visible bodily return of Christ to the earth to rule and reign.

Blessed hope — The encouragement that comes from the certainty that Christ will one day return to reign over all the earth.

Therefore, Christians should live with the expectation and urgency that Christ may return at any moment.

Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:44; John 14:3

The Eternal State

We believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do, at death, immediately pass into His presence¹ and there remain until the resurrection of the body at His coming for the church when soul and glorified body, reunited, will live with Him forever². We believe that unbelievers will be punished with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power.³

Separation — The ultimate eternal punishment is separation forever from God's presence.

Therefore, all people will live forever. They will either live with God forever or separated from Him forever.

¹*Luke 23:43;* ²*Corinthians 5:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55;* ³*Matthew 25:31-34, 41*

SACRAMENTS

We believe that Christ ordained certain holy rituals for the church to observe, through which the Spirit uniquely acts. These rituals are common to faith communities around the world. These holy rituals are symbolic of spiritual events. They are **baptism** and **the Lord's Supper**, also known as Communion or the holy Eucharist.

Communion

We celebrate the Lord's Supper as an act of worship in order to remember Christ's sacrifice¹. But it is also to serve as a reminder of the day when we will feast with Him in heaven. At Northland, communion is typically observed the first Sunday of each month, and on other spiritually significant times. The Lord's Table is open to anyone who is a Christian and is walking in fellowship with Christ. This includes the maintaining of right relationships between Christians, as explained in Matthew 5:23-24.

¹*1 Corinthians 11:23-29*

Water Baptism

Baptism is a symbolic act visibly representing the union between the believer and Christ¹ and among believers as well². We do not believe that baptism is essential for salvation (for example, Christ was baptized, as was the thief on the cross³), but we do believe that it is a natural expression of conversion that every Christian should pursue. As it is the Holy Spirit who baptizes each believer into the body of Christ,⁴ we extend liberty of conscience in the mode of water baptism. Some in our fellowship prefer immersion, which symbolizes the believer's death, burial, and resurrection with Christ.⁵ Others in our fellowship prefer pouring or sprinkling, which symbolizes the Holy Spirit's work of uniting us to Christ, cleansing us from sin, and regenerating us.⁶

¹*Romans 6:3-6; Galatians 3:27-28; Colossians 2:11-12;* ²*1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:1-6;* ³*Luke 23:39-43;* ⁴*1 Corinthians 12:13;* ⁵*Romans 6:3-4;* ⁶*Titus 3:5*

Baby Dedication and Infant Baptism

Jesus took great delight in having little children brought to Him for His blessing.¹ Northland provides alternate avenues — baby dedication and infant baptism — by which parents may publicly express their trust in God's saving grace for their children, commit themselves in the power of Christ to obey God in raising their children, and call on others in the church to aid in this challenging process. Some, believing that only those who have made a credible profession of faith are eligible for water baptism², present their babies for dedication to the Lord. Others, appreciating the significance of covenant in the Old and New Testaments, believe that infant baptism is an appropriate symbolism for believers' children prior to faith³, without suggesting that the infant is thereby personally saved or guaranteed salvation.

¹*Luke 18:15-17;* ²*Acts 2:38;* ³*1 Corinthians 7:14; Colossians 2:11-12*

// FOR MORE ON DEDICATION AND INFANT BAPTISM:

www.northlandchurch.net

Marriage

While marriage is not an official sacrament of the Protestant church, in the strictest sense, a sacrament is merely a rite or practice in which God is uniquely active. This is certainly true of marriage. Christ Himself called it a “mystery.” Marriage is believed to be a mysterious and holy union between a man and a woman — a covenant for life.

WORSHIPING GOD

"A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." – Jesus Christ (John 4:23, NIV)

Everything in the Christian life begins and ends in worship. We believe our greatest privilege and most glorious calling as believers in Christ is to gather to glorify the living God for who He is and what He has done. Each week Northland gathers to worship by focusing on a single attribute of God's nature. Seeing God becomes the goal of worship each week, rather than achieving a particular style, so the services take on many forms. It is only in truly seeing God that we can accurately see ourselves and our great need for Him.

The worship planning team works to bring together the foundations of the historical creeds of the faith and time-honored practices of the church with new, innovative tools in order to create what Robert Webber has called the "ancient future" worship, "the common tradition of the church's worship in Word, Table, and song, practiced faithfully and communicated clearly in every context of the world."

In bringing the kingdom of heaven to earth, it is our desire to see the church, the body of Christ, connect to worship God together. A hallmark of our congregation, from its earliest days to the present, has been creative, Spirit-led worship. It is the desire of Northland to utilize the arts and technologies to pursue a style of worship that embraces both the churches historic foundations and our present culture — to merge all of the wisdom of the creeds and doctrines with the future possibilities of technology and innovation.

To worship is...

- ...to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God,**
- ...to feed the mind with the truth of God,**
- ...to purge the imagination by the beauty of God,**
- ...to open the heart to the love of God,**
- ...to devote the will to the purpose of God.**

— WILLIAM TEMPLE

(ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY FROM 1942 TO 1944)

Northland gathers for worship in a variety of contexts: in several physical locations around Central Florida, and at various times over the weekend, connected in real time and by a live feed, using technology as a tool to reconnect the body of Christ.

Northland has been web streaming its services since January 2006. Through an innovative web-based application, worshipers are not only able to participate in services via live online video; they also have many new ways to interact with the church and with one another. A live web stream of the worship service is accessible via iPhone and iPad. And thousands have chosen the Northland Channel on their ROKU menu.

The worship web interface includes immediate access to an online pastor and the ability to chat instantly with him and other worshipers. Web worship is not new, but this new application takes online worship to a new level. It helps to remove the passivity of simply observing a worship service via the web.

Each weekend, worshipers at thousands of sites around the world join us, bringing the church into homes, coffee shops, hospital rooms, military bases, offices, prisons and many other sites. A site may consist of an individual, a family gathered at home, or dozens of people gathered together as a house church to participate in worship. People throughout the world who don't currently have a church home can join us each week for any service. This is in keeping with Northland's distributed church philosophy, which arranges itself around the relationships of congregants and partners, rather than around a location. Online worship is a catalyst to allow people to worship anywhere.

Both the size and number of sites are growing rapidly, as believers around the world look to join others for worship. It is our hope that live web stream worship will prove useful to the burgeoning house church movement. Northland's leadership is moving to intentionally facilitate these types of gatherings by making all resources readily available to anyone looking to participate in responding to God for the benefit of others. All of Northland's services are archived at our website to enable worshipers to gather anywhere, at any time to worship together. This is important for those who do not have access through continuous online technology.

SERVING OTHERS

Belonging to Christ means becoming a lifelong servant. As believers, we respond to God for the benefit of others. We serve Him by serving them. As Jesus said, ‘...whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ (Matthew 25:40).

**“If we were to put the ontology (structure of being) of the triune God into a formula, it would look something like this:
I AM = Us for Them, There.**

I Am represents God’s name or His divine nature, His being (Exodus 3:14). It can also represent the sense of identity of those who are made according to His image (Genesis 1:26-27). And it most certainly would represent a church that He is building to be His representative on earth (Colossians 1:15-20). God is neither singular nor plural; He is both at once.”

– DR. JOEL C. HUNTER, *CHURCH DISTRIBUTED*

As with God, there is a purpose for the church being together. It is for “them, there,” and not only for us. For this reason, service is not just an add-on in the life of a believer. It is the life of a believer. When we live generously and serve others, we are responding to God and being His light in the world.

Northland provides many different types of service opportunities for its congregation, locally, nationally, and globally. Some of these opportunities include distributed journeys, going to our partners and serving alongside them throughout the world.

In the era in which we live, we have an historic opportunity to demonstrate Christ’s love by meeting the needs of those around us. In order to respond to this opportunity, teams from Northland go out to minister through education, medicine, construction, children’s programs, mercy ministry, or meeting more general, practical needs.

It is our goal for serving to become the posture of each member, so that it will define who we are as a church and will not just describe what we do as a church. Serving is our DNA.

Global Service

“Partners” are churches and ministry or service organizations with which Northland has ever-deepening relationships for mutual support and increased effectiveness for the kingdom of God. We are not complete without each other. Our partners further our understanding and appreciation of God. Like all relationships, these partnerships are dynamic. They need to be renewed on a regular basis, or they will lose their vitality. Though we may have different missions and methods, we come together with other churches and Christian organizations to work for the common good. Working alongside our partners for the kingdom provides encouragement, challenge, and a broader perspective.

Northland's partners include: Kithu Sevana, in Sri Lanka; San Andres En Olivos, in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Igreja Presbyteriana in Manaus, Brazil; Kasr el Dohara in Cairo, Egypt; Vredelust church in Cape Town, South Africa and many more.

Local Service

“Northland partners with a number of local organizations that work to serve those in need within our community. Part of being a church distributed is making connections and building relationships for greater Kingdom impact. Our partners give us a better view of the needs within the local area, providing Northland's staff and congregation with opportunities to share God's love with others in tangible and practical ways. You can learn about our local partners at www.northlandchurch.net/partners/local.

Resource Point

Resource Point is a web-based tool that allows churches, social service agencies, non-profits, government organizations and other similar providers to partner together for a holistic approach to meeting the needs of its community.

Local Serve Projects

One of the most practical ways to “Be the Church” everywhere, every day is by serving locally in the community. At Northland, service is not just something we do, it's an essential part of who we are. Serving in the local community is a very tangible way of demonstrating God's love for those around us. We know that figuring out where, how and when to serve can be challenging. Whether you serve at one of our quarterly Local Serve Days, volunteer at Northland or work with one of our local partner organizations, there are opportunities available to use the time, talents and gifts that God has given you.

Disaster Response Teams

Northland's Disaster Response Teams (DRTs) are trained and ready to respond to incidents locally, nationally and globally. Ongoing training for the DRTs is available online or in a classroom setting, as well as through regularly scheduled field experience preparation. Once a month, for field experience preparation, team members sharpen their skills by serving the local community through outreach opportunities.

Esther House

Nehemiah Project

Serving Our Congregation

There are many ways the congregation, leaders, staff, ministers, and pastors at Northland come alongside individuals during seasons of blessing or trial. Some of the specific and practical ways we can assist are listed here:

Prayer

Personal prayer support is available in the sanctuary following each worship service. A wonderful prayer network is available online at Northland's website, where you can post your request, pray for another's, and click to let that person know you prayed about their specific need. You can also complete a Prayer Request Card, or call the emergency prayer line (407-949-4025).

The elders of Northland take seriously the call in James 5:14-16 to respond to requests from individuals in the church suffering from physical illness, emotional illness, or addictive behavior, to anoint them with oil, and to pray for their healing. Elders are available following Sunday worship services or by special arrangement (407-949-4000).

Counseling

Northland values partnerships that intentionally build relationships to bring increase for the kingdom of heaven, so that all who participate will be better able to love and serve others. By collaborating closely with our local network of professional counselors, the Discovery Counseling ministry, and the Oviedo Counseling Clinic, we are able to provide sensitive and specialized biblical counsel. Among the many benefits this brings to our body are the abilities to provide not only counseling resources, but also training, continuing education, consulting, referrals, and emergency assistance through our partners. Prayer and spiritual care are also available from ministers at each of our sites, as well as Care Ministers throughout Central Florida.

Weddings

Northland values the covenant of marriage. It is the desire of the elders, pastors, staff, and ministry leaders that your lifetime commitment to each other will reflect and communicate Christ's love. To that end, the process

of marriage preparation is one in which we are heavily invested. Wedding services are available to couples that regularly attend Northland. Marriage Preparation and Pastoral Services teams are committed and ready to help you build a strong foundation for your marriage and plan your wedding day.

LifeHope

As a recipient of God's abundant grace, Northland seeks to give abundantly to others in order to reflect His nature. LifeHope is a benevolence ministry that serves people in need in our church family and community for the purpose of connecting them to a relationship with God and to Christian community.

Hospital visitation

The visitation team is privileged to visit the sick and suffering. Our desire is to bring hope, encouragement, and the assurance of God's presence and provision and to reflect God's love through our presence.

Funerals

It is our privilege to care for our members through difficult times of loss. It is a sacred time for families and friends to rejoice in the all God has given them. Northland's pastoral care team will gladly guide you through the preparation of a funeral service.

Contact the church office (407-949-4000) regarding any of your care needs.

GIVING

Through Tithes and Offerings

Wit is our desire for Northland to be a generous church. We want our congregation to see themselves as agents of generosity. When we give extravagantly to people in need and to the church, we are responding to God's generous love for us.

Long ago the governing elders of Northland decided that the church should set aside 15% of its annual income, meaning all tithes and offerings, for benevolence, care and serving others. As you can see from the breadth of service offered to and through this body, contributing toward these endeavors is a privilege.

While we affirm the biblical principle of tithing (10%), we further acknowledge the truth of Psalm 24:1, which explains that all (100%) of our money and possessions belong to the Lord. Since each of us serves as a steward of God's resources, we encourage all Christians to pray and seek the Lord's guidance in giving above and beyond the tithe. This may, of course,

take the form of donations to specific Christ-honoring work in the church and other ministries.

“Tithe” traditionally means one-tenth. It is one of the earliest standards of giving referenced in Scripture. In Genesis 14, Abraham gave a tithe of his grain to the priest Melchizedek following God’s faithfulness to him and his family. This pattern is reinforced throughout the Old Testament (including in Deuteronomy 14:22-23; 2 Chronicles 31:5; Malachi 3) and endorsed by Jesus in the New Testament (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42).

Giving envelopes are located at each of the sanctuary exits and in the main foyer for the giving your tithes and offerings. Additionally, there are automated kiosks for giving in the foyer at the Longwood site, and Northland’s website (www.northlandchurch.net) offers an online giving option.

// FOR MORE ON CHRISTIAN GIVING:

www.northlandchurch.net

EQUIPPING

On the road to spiritual maturity, we are changing day by day. Becoming more like Christ is the process over which the Holy Spirit superintends in the life of each believer. But as God’s instrument on earth, the body of Christ plays an important role. As a church, Northland sees its mission to provide ongoing opportunities to encourage each believer to respond to God for the benefit of others. These responses include worshipping God, reading the Bible, prayer, serving others, living generously, being in community and sharing stories of God’s grace and goodness. These responses are integrated in the life of the church and the lives of individuals. It is the goal of Northland leadership to equip the body of Christ to respond to God for the benefit of others.

Equipping goes beyond education or training. It involves our experiences. It is a process that happens along the way, through relationship, not in isolation and not in a classroom. We will best equip believers by providing opportunities for worship and service as continued spiritual development. Our goal for believers will be accomplished as they worship and serve together, using as their foundation an established framework of scriptural teaching. The Equipping staff is working to create a systematic, multicultural, web-based curriculum that can be distributed worldwide for the kingdom to enable the church to reach the lost with the Gospel.

Equipping at Northland is accomplished in many ways: through corporate worship, through individual and group service, through relationships, and through opportunities for continued learning. Many

of the equipping options can be experienced individually or in a group. You can find up-to-date information on each one of them in the monthly newspaper, RESPOND, or online at www.northlandchurch.net.

WHAT IS A “CHURCH DISTRIBUTED”?

Put simply, it means that church isn't a building — it's people, like you, distributing themselves into every aspect of society and being the church everywhere, every day.

For centuries, the church has distributed Christians into the world to fulfill their callings and has kept building relationships based on their service to others. Acts 13:1-3 gives an account of God initiating a call to particular individuals and the church sending (distributing) them to a ministry that later results in relationships for that church. As the movement builds, specific territories are put in the hearts of the sent ones (Acts 16:9-10), resulting in a network of churches sharing resources to better help people (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). The Bible speaks of “the church ... which is at ... with all ... in every place” (see 1 Corinthians 1:2, NASB). The early church, the New Testament Church, was a church distributed.

In the present model of the church, we tend to be isolated and preoccupied with our own worlds. It appears to be, and often is, self-centered. Our triune God, by His very nature, models relationship-centeredness. God in Christ came out of His self-sufficiency to identify with those radically different from Himself, and His people are called to be like Him.

The church distributed values ministry beyond its walls because it focuses on those not yet included — this is why we do concurrent worship at several local sites and on the web, going out to people, rather than asking people to come to us. But it also connects people within its congregation to love each other up close.

People in Northland's congregation take leadership of nearly every ministry effort inside the church, out in the community and abroad. Elders, pastors, and paid staff have a hand-off approach — they literally hand off the ministry God has given a person, to that Spirit-led person! They don't try to control the initiatives of congregants or the connections they make, and they don't watch over their shoulders unnecessarily. Elders, pastors, and paid staff pray for them, get them the training and resources they need, and if someone's doing something weird or flaky, the church leaders hear about it and follow up. But there is no doubt in anyone's mind that we all are on the same team.

This is freeing not just for our congregants, but it's freeing for our leaders because they don't have to be everywhere trying to run everything. And as you might imagine, much more ministry gets done when procedures and systems aren't esteemed over service. We always encourage those who worship at Northland: "Do what you can, where you are, with what you've got." And they do!

This is not another church-growth strategy or some let's-play-nice-together ecumenical effort. It is a connecting strategy that results in spiritual maturity. Connecting with one another is the means, not the goal. Christ came so that people could be saved. He poured His life out for those outside the kingdom. The world needs Christ, and Christians must intentionally combine in more effective ways to go into the world to present the gospel and support each other for the harvest.

There are even people God gives us to cooperate with who are very different in perspective and purpose. Not every relationship is a partnership. God uses those differences to clarify the positions of both parties.

An example of such a relationship: ad hoc cooperation between or among a church, synagogue, mosque, or government agency to accomplish an agreed upon project to improve the community. Such an ad hoc cooperation is not partnering in a spiritual sense. But because a church distributed isn't absorbing others into its likeness, it can work with a variety of others toward a common good. We cannot be spiritually close with those of other beliefs, but we can work together to better our community and create peace. Deeply committed to Jesus Christ, we can accomplish more because of our differences — without giving up our unique identities — than we can accomplish on our own.

The church, at large, is missing a way to benefit from differences, and that is affecting its strength and health. Fear and suspicion of differences limit the church's spiritual maturity. Both spiritual and intellectual maturity grow from differences. A distributed church uses contrasts to accomplish kingdom purposes.

— Adapted from *Church Distributed*, by Dr. Joel C. Hunter



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