

North River Community Church

Church Profile

April, 2016

History of North River

North River Community Church was launched in the fall of 1989 by a steering team of ten people, led by Paul Atwater as our founding pastor. The “North River” part of the church’s name identified a region of several towns that were connected by the path of the North River on its way toward the shore. By including “Community” in the name, our desire was to model ourselves after the Acts 2 community that made up the very first church in the Christian era. From the outset, North River’s mission was aimed at presenting the good news of Jesus Christ to unchurched people throughout Boston’s South Shore region, starting with Pembroke.

North River’s first rented a meeting space in the Pembroke Community Center, where the church met for services for six months. Growth demands led to a move to Corporate Park on Oak Street in Pembroke. As North River grew, additional space was leased, allowing growth from 50 people to around 400 people over the next 13 years. In 1999, North River acquired 44.2 acres of land from the Tedeschi Realty Company at 334 Old Oak Street in Pembroke, which sits on the Pembroke/Marshfield town lines. Most of the purchase price was donated by the Tedeschi Realty Company. After a series of capital campaigns, North River Community Church relocated to its new campus in March, 2003.

The desire to reach non-churched people led North River’s early leadership team to adopt several principles that were pioneered by Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. These principles focused on thinking through the seeking and faith development process that people go through when they are investigating the claims of Christ. Several years later, North River merged those concepts with a believer development process that focuses on the five purposes of Christ that are found in the Great Commandment and in the Great Commission. Pastor Atwater and several other members went through training to implement these principles at Saddleback Church in California.

Growth continued during the next few years, as North River’s Sunday attendance reached a high of nearly 600 people. In 2004 North River was one of several churches nationally that were honored with a “Purpose Driven Church Health Award” given by Purpose Drive Ministries at Saddleback Church. Children’s ministries and student ministries were expanded to develop faith and biblical understanding to children and teens from the North River family as well as from families outside of our church. North River is also a church of small groups, with more than 200 to 300 people meeting in home small groups throughout the region. Since 2005, North River has also been part of a unique urban-suburban partnership with urban Boston schools that has become a model for church-school partnerships. Today, North River averages around 450

people in our Sunday services, with approximately 400 members and 250+ people in small group fellowships.

Ministry Setting

North River Community Church is a regional church that is located on land in both Pembroke and Marshfield, yet has a regional makeup, with people traveling from Quincy to Plymouth.

Pembroke is an historic town, settled in 1650, that today has a population of more than 17,000 people. Marshfield was settled in 1632 and incorporated in 1640, and today has a population of more than 25,000 people. Roughly 500,000 people live in the region from Quincy to Plymouth, within a 30 minute driving range of Route 3's exit #12, which borders North River Community Church's land. Our location sits approximately half-way between Boston and Cape Cod.

Boston, the closest major city, is located 28 miles North from Pembroke. Boston is home to a thriving business and financial district with excellent hospitals, more than 100 colleges and universities within a 60 mile radius of the city, and is home to many historical and cultural markers, including the Bunker Hill Monument, Faneuil Hall, the Boston Common, and the nation's oldest U.S. Navy vessel, The Constitution. The city is also home to the Red Sox, Celtics, and Bruins, with the New England Patriots nearby in Foxboro.

Vision and Mission

Our mission statement is: "Helping people who are far from God to become fully developed worshipers and servants of Christ." Our desire is to introduce people to Jesus who have been away from church and those who have never been part of the church, while taking Christ-followers deeper in faith as we pursue the five purposes that flow from the heart of Jesus.

North River's vision focuses on growing in church health so that we can also grow in size. Our current facility was built as Phase One in the three phase development plan that aims at maximum usage of our buildable land. The building includes classrooms, offices, and a multi-use worship center. Phase Two would add classrooms and an intermediate meeting space, while Phase Three would add a dedicated worship center capable of seating 1,000 people.

Our staff and Overseers team has been pursuing a long-range plan that features several strategic initiatives aimed at growing North River's core ministries and infrastructure in order to position the church for continued growth and expansion. One key outcome of this long-range plan is the addition of an Executive Pastor to help drive these strategic initiatives and to align North River's staff and ministries with the goals set forth in this long-range plan.

Staff

North River currently has five full-time pastors and six part-time support staff members. Senior Pastor Paul Atwater has been on board for North River's entire 26+ year history. Children's

Ministries Pastor Ayn DuVoisin joined the staff team in 2000. Worship Pastor David Coate signed on in 2001. Denis Keith, our Life Development Pastor, was added in 2005, and Student Ministries Pastor Garrett Walston joined our staff in 2011.

Our pastoral staff is surrounded by a small, but skilled team, including Office Manager Sue Crossman, Facilities Manager Dan Wrin, Student Ministries Assistant Melinda Bertoni, KidsZone Coordinator Miranda Payne, and Bookkeeper Debbie Casey.

Most of North River's ministry teams are led by our members and resourced by our church staff.

Leadership Structure

North River's leadership structure is a hybrid between an elder-led and a congregational government. Members vote on a handful of things, with an emphasis on helping members get involved in ministry more than in business meetings. North River Overseers Team along with our Senior Pastor guides and oversees the values, priorities and overall direction of our ministry. Our ten Overseers plus our Senior Pastor typically meet once per month, with each Overseer serving as a ministry liaison or leader of individual ministry teams.

Our Deacons Team partners with our pastors to meet needs within the church family and throughout our community in order to serve people and facilitate ministry growth. North River's Finance Team oversees the policies, procedures and budgets of the church. The Finance Team reports to the Overseers and assists in all matters that require financial planning, and integrity.

Children's Ministries

Our children's ministries are led by Pastor Ayn DuVoisin. Ayn has pioneered and developed KidsZone, a creative teaching ministry for children that is staffed by dozens of key volunteers. The mission this team has crafted is, "Teaching the Father's Foundation with Fun." KidsZone is our Sunday morning ministry that runs along-side our two Sunday adult services. An annual VBS/Summer Camp, a Moms and Tots group, and a Christian Education Council are part of the offerings and structure of our children's ministries.

Student Ministries

North River's Student Ministries (NRSM) feature three primary efforts. Impact meets on Thursday nights and focuses on training high school believers (grades 9-12) and reaching non-churched teens as well. NRSM has sent several teams of teens on mission trips, with this year's team going to Peru in July, serving with IncaLink. PowerHouse is our middle school ministry, which meets on Tuesday nights. PowerHouse is often wild and crazy, and aims at sowing key

discipleship principles into the hearts of middle school students while also enfolded friends of the church from several towns and communities each year. The third primary feature is iChat, a Sunday morning class for middle school students that meets during our adult services. Our middle school and high school ministries each look forward to an annual winter retreat in New Hampshire.

Small Groups

North River has approximately 30+ small groups that meet during the school year. Most of them meet in homes, while a few meet at the church building, since its location is central for many people who attend North River. Pastor Denis Keith oversees the small groups ministry, along with a team that helps coordinate and coach the group leaders. Several of these are “sermon-based” small groups, while others will follow a book of the Bible or focus on a current Christian book. Periodically, all of our small groups band together for an “All-Church Campaign” that ties our Sunday morning teaching to our small group ministries for maximum impact and shared learning. Some of the “All-Church” studies have included the 40 Days of Purpose, the 40 Days of Community, Transformed, Romans, John, and The Story.

Global Outreach

Our Global Outreach Team focuses on supporting and corresponding with a handful of missionaries, and on organizing local outreach efforts where North River serves our local communities. The most recent community effort centered on a “School Reading Room Make-over” that featured constructing a garden-themed library/reading room at the Timilty Middle School in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston in March, 2016. The Global Outreach Team was led for several years by Pastor Denis Keith and today is led by a membership team chaired by one of our Overseers, Luke Schriefer.

Guywire

Guywire is North River's men's ministry. Guywire was developed internally by a group of men led by Derek Churchill as the ministry leader, Denis Keith as our Life Development Pastor, and a leadership team. Guywire aims to be all-inclusive, enfolded men who serve in any area of the church. Guywire includes occasional Saturday "Guywire Connect" days to gather, inspire and team men from North River and other participating churches, a men's mentoring program that focuses on triads with mentor and two mentees, an annual three-day hike in the White Mountains, and several other connecting events. A growing number of other churches have participated in Guywire events, and a handful of those churches use Guywire's printed devotional guides as well.

Budget

North River's budget year runs from July 1 through June 30. Annual budgets are set by the Overseers after significant input from the Finance Team, the pastoral staff, and our Senior Pastor. In future years, our Executive Pastor will be expected to take the lead in coordinating this budget process and aligning our budget to current ministry needs and to strategic plans. Our budget for the 2015-2016 year is \$750,000.

Global Leadership Summit

North River is a satellite host site for the Global Leadership Summit (GLS), created and sponsored by Willow Creek Association and Willow Creek Community Church in Illinois. This year we will be one of more than 400 sites across North America to host the GLS on August 11-12. This will be NRCC's 3rd year of hosting. Last year, more than 105,000 people attended in North America, with about 145,000 attending at other sites around the world as the GLS moves to Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. We strongly urge North River members and attenders to be part of this event.

Statement of Faith

NRCC's Statement of Faith was written by Dr. R.C. Sproul. It was originally written for Prison Fellowship and North River was granted permission to use this as well. Our Steering Team was drawn to this statement because it articulates core issues of orthodox Christian faith clearly, without becoming mired in secondary or non-essential matters.

ABOUT GOD: We believe in one God, Creator, and Lord of the Universe, the co-eternal Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

ABOUT JESUS: We believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary atoning death on the cross, rose bodily from the dead, and ascended to heaven where, as truly God and truly man, He is the only mediator between God and man.

ABOUT SCRIPTURE: We believe the Bible is God's authoritative and inspired Word. It is without error in all its teachings, including creation, history, its own origins, and salvation. Christians must submit to its divine authority, both individually and corporately, in all matters of belief and conduct which is demonstrated by true righteous living.

ABOUT SALVATION: We believe that all people are lost sinners and cannot see the Kingdom of God except through the new birth. Justification is by grace through faith in Christ alone.

ABOUT THE CHURCH: We believe in one holy, universal, and apostolic Church. Its calling is to worship God and witness concerning its Head, Jesus Christ, preaching the Gospel among all nations and demonstrating its commitment by compassionate service to the needs of human beings and promoting righteousness and justice.

ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT: We believe in the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit for the individual's new birth and growth to maturity, and for the Church's constant renewal in truth, wisdom, faith, holiness, love, power, and mission.

ABOUT THE RETURN OF CHRIST: We believe that Jesus Christ will personally and visibly return in glory to raise the dead and bring salvation and judgment to completion. God will fully manifest His Kingdom when He establishes a new heaven and a new earth in which He will be glorified forever and exclude all evil, suffering, and death.

Additional Position Statements

Back in 1989, North River's Steering Team and Pastor Atwater spent several months wrestling through our understanding of the roles of men and women within the people of God. The result of that study led us to embrace and employ the spiritual gifts of both men and women at every level of church leadership. We were led to this position through a biblical process, not in any attempt to embrace a feministic position or to be politically correct. The dominant, controlling principles guiding this decision are found in Galatians 3:28-29, which states that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for we are all one in Christ.

We see this principle expressing God's desire for liberating his people from the impact of the Fall in Genesis 3, and restoring God's intended purpose for men and women to rule over his creation together, as Adam and Eve did before the Fall. We respect the right of individual members to respectfully disagree with this position, even while the church continues to encourage the full use of our spiritual gifts in every area of ministry and leadership.

North River also developed a Statement on our Understanding of Spiritual Gifts in 1990. This statement articulates that we believe that the spiritual gifts that are listed in the Scriptures continue to be relevant and effective today. However, we do not believe that there is any one spiritual gift that in and of itself is a sign of Christian maturity, nor do we believe that all Christ followers are given the same gifts. We opt to avoid the use of the more controversial gifts in our public services out of a desire to include and to avoid confusing seekers and new believers.

4/25/16