OCCASIONAL CAMPUS COMMUNIQUE

November 29, 2011

The President's Perspective – A Brief Essay

Tradition has it that in 1880 Edward White Benson, an English pastor, gathered his congregation in a small wooden shed used occasionally as their parish church for a special service on Christmas Eve. In this service Pastor Benson combined readings from scripture and the singing of Advent hymns and Christmas carols to tell the story of Jesus—the fall of humanity, the promise of a Messiah, the birth of Jesus, and the visit of the magi. It doesn't take much to imagine what this service must have been like: a small group of English Christians, shivering in the winter night, perhaps gathered round a bucket of coals to keep the least bit warm. Scripture passages were read with some hesitation, stumbling over words of ancient text. Carols were sung both on-tune and off, in harmony and with dissonance. Yet it was Christmas Eve, so all was well in 1880.

Over the following decades this humble tradition has become known around the world. Adopted by the English church the Festival Service of Lessons and Carols is broadcast each year on Christmas Eve from King's College, Cambridge featuring carols sung by the famous Choir of King's College.

It also is a tradition adopted by North Park University. Singing in harmony and always on tune, the students of North Park celebrate the beginning of the Advent season with a Festival Service of Lessons and Carols. The setting is not a wooden shed but rather the sanctuary of Our Lady of Mercy Church, just south from the University on Kedzie Avenue in the Albany Park neighborhood. The carols are both familiar and new; English, Swedish, and from around the world. The scripture passages tell the celebrated story from Genesis through Revelation, read in English and Spanish. The audience includes students, their parents, faculty and staff along with family members and neighbors, donor friends of North Park, parishioners from Our Lady of Mercy Church, and others from our Chicago neighborhood.

This is a special season at North Park. The end of the semester approaches, final exams await, yet Advent is here. Even as Mary and Joseph found their way to Bethlehem, we make our way to Albany Park. As the star shone brightly over the manger, the twinkle of a million lights makes this city a grand and sacred place to celebrate the birth of the Christ-child. As the magi gathered from far and distant places, immigrant families from around the world join us to adore the newborn Christ.

Emmanuel has	come; God is with	us and among u	IS.

The last month of the calendar year offers a great deal for celebration. These are opportunities to reflect and applaud, to contemplate and cheer, to stand in candlelight and sing with joy. In every case we can enjoy these opportunities with friends and colleagues from across the North Park community. Many of these are also opportunities to include family members in our celebration of Christmas.

Sunday, December 4, at 4:00 p.m. – Festival Service of Lessons and Carols

- Presented by the School of Music
- Includes music by North Park choirs and orchestra
- Also participating will be the YOURS Orchestra from the Hibbard School and the Chicago Children's Choir of Albany Park, both part of the University's reach into our neighborhood
- Location: Our Lady of Mercy Church, just south from campus along Kedzie Avenue at 4432 N. Troy Street
- Admission is free

Thursday and Friday, December 8 and 9, from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. – <u>Holiday Open House</u> at Hawkinson House

- Hosted by President David and Linda Parkyn
- For all faculty and staff, spouses and guests
- Wonderful holiday food and great conversation
- Music by North Park students each evening at 8:15
- Contact Karen Mears (ext. 5710 or kmears@northpark.edu) with your evening of choice

Tuesday, December 13, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. – <u>Christmas Lunch for Faculty and Staff</u>

- Delicious lunch buffet in Hamming Hall
- Music for the season
- Recognition of faculty and staff for five-year anniversaries of service at North Park
- Please send your RSVP to Karen Mears (ext. 5710 or kmears@northpark.edu)

Friday, December 16, 7:30 p.m. – Winter Commencement

- A grand celebration in the gymnasium
- Awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees
- A few tears of joy, along with many smiles from all of us

Saturday, December 24 through Monday, January 2 – Holiday Break

- The campus is closed for usual business
- Faculty and staff have time for leisure alone and with family, a bit of extra sleep, a walk through the falling snow, declaring New Year's resolutions

2012 Salary Adjustment

We're pleased to announce that effective January 1, 2012 the university is providing a 3% wage and salary increase to all full-time employees. Additionally, an amount equal to approximately 1% of total salaries is apportioned for promotion, performance, and equity adjustments. As previously announced, increases in the cost of health insurance for North Park faculty and staff have moderated somewhat this year, due to our recent claims experience, with an increase in premiums close to 5%.

Campus Improvements

During the holiday break a number of projects will be undertaken to provide improvements to our campus facilities. These will include the following:

- Smart classroom electronic mediation, wall and flooring improvements, and installation of air handling ducts (to prepare for air conditioning this summer) in Nyvall 25. This extends improvements completed earlier this semester on the second floor of this building.
- Carpeting and painting for offices and the hallway on the third floor of Caroline Hall.
- Completion of the installation of one new elevator in Carlson Tower.
- Installation of a new chiller in the Carlson Tower machine room for improved and much more efficient summer air conditioning for this building.
- Exterior door replacements at the west entrance to the Carlson Tower and gymnasium building.

Gathering Day 2.0

Last we initiated this program, this year we'll make it an NPU tradition!

Gathering Day 2.0 will be held on January 23, 2012. Faculty and staff are invited to gather at 10:30 a.m. in Anderson Chapel for community worship, introduction of new employees, and the president's welcome to the spring semester. Immediately following we'll move to Hamming Hall for lunch.