

# The Carriage Stone

December 2008

New Hempstead Presbyterian Church, New City, NY.  
The English Church

## Silent Night, Holy Night



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"The Carriage Stone" is the Newsletter of

**The New Hempstead Presbyterian Church**

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### Next Deadline:

Sunday, January 12

**Submissions:** in my mailbox  
or e-mail to

carriagestone@nhpchurch.org

## Christmas Worship Schedule

Sunday, <b>November 30</b> , 11 AM First Sunday of Advent		Worship service Church decorating afterwards
Sunday, <b>December 7</b> , 11 AM Second Sunday of Advent		Worship Service with Communion and dedication of the Advent cards
Wednesday, <b>December 10</b> , 7:30 PM		The Rev. Dr. Lori Knight-Whitehouse will lead a Blue Christmas worship service
Sunday, <b>December 14</b> , 11 AM Third Sunday of Advent		Worship Service with children participation
Sunday, <b>December 21</b> , 11 AM Fourth Sunday of Advent		Worship service
Wednesday, <b>December 24</b> , 8 PM Christmas Eve		Candlelight Worship service with Communion
Sunday, <b>December 28</b> , 11 AM Sunday after Christmas		Hymn Sing Worship service <div style="float: right; text-align: center;">  </div>



**Blue**  
CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be a time of joyous preparation and excitement, but for some people Christmas brings painful memories of loved ones lost or troubled times. Some folks struggle to get through a season that others look forward to. If you or someone you know has a difficult time during this season, please consider joining us for the **Blue Christmas** service. There will be prayers and meditations that may help you to get through this season a little easier this year, as well as some guitar music and a focus on the true meaning of the Christmas season, without the hustle and bustle of traditional seasonal distractions. The service begins at 7:30 on Wednesday, December 10. We hope to see you there.

We will have our Traditional Hymn Sing service on Sunday, December 28 – choose your favorite hymns we may have missed during the Christmas Season and request them at this service! Now’s your chance to sing hymns which “we haven’t sung in a long time.”





# FROM THE PASTOR

## Spiritual, but not Religious

Advent blessings to all! Following is an article from Jerry van Marter of the *Presbyterian News Service*. I found it very interesting, and I know that there are many in our neighborhoods who are SBNR, or “Spiritual but not Religious.” After you read it, ask yourself, “What gifts can we as a faith community take to our neighbors who consider themselves “Spiritual, but not religious?”

**LOUISVILLE:** One of the first and most frequent statements Americans hear when conversation turns to religion is spiritual but not religious.

Growing alienation of young people from organized churches and the general decline in church membership in the country have many denominations scrambling to find new ways to reach out to the unchurched.

The Rev. Linda Mercadante, a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) minister who teaches theology at Methodist Theological School in Ohio, has moved beyond speculation and conducted extensive research on what people mean when they say spiritual but not religious.

She recently shared some of her findings, which will be published in book form sometime, she says, with a group of about 50 PC(USA) national staff members here. Her visit was hosted by the denominations Research Services office.

Referring to SBNRs Mercadante freely admitted she was once one of them. I was definitely one of those people, she said. I’m a baby-boomer” I tried yoga, Transcendental Meditation, all that stuff. My mother was Catholic and my father was Jewish so I had no real religious training growing up. I went through it all” Catholicism, atheism and finally found the PC(USA).

Everybody knows someone who professes to be SBNR, Mercadante said, and so she has traveled around the country Colorado, New York, Ohio, California, even to Canada conducting 90-minute interviews with anyone who will talk to her.

The response has been overwhelming. I spent two months in Boulder (CO) and there were so many volunteers I didn’t have time for them all, she said. There’s not just a spiritual hunger out there, but a hunger to talk about it.

So why aren’t these spiritual but not religious people in the church?

One of the common assumptions is that many spiritual but not religious people had bad experiences in the church is simply not true, she said. I was surprised, but there was very minimal reporting by people that they had been hurt in or by the church.

In fact, Mercadante said, spiritual but not religious people start in many different places but they all seem to have arrived at close to the same place.

That place, she continued, is marked by stereotypical arguments against organized religion and the claims of churches. They include:

- churches claim to exclusive truthfulness, that they have a corner on the truth market;
- churches demand that personal beliefs be abdicated;
- churches demand conformity to a corporate mentality;
- joining a church means a loss of personal integrity;
- churches demand commitment to things that have no meaning
- churches demand commitment to disagreeable codes of conduct; and
- churches profess arbitrary or implausible beliefs.

I heard the same arguments over and over again, Mercadante said of her research. I don’t know where this script comes from no one knows any real churches that fit this profile or stereotype.

Another flawed assumption, Mercadante said, is that young people leave the church, typically after high school if not before, but then return to the church after they get married and have kids. By and large, it doesn’t happen, she said.

Another religious researcher, Robert Wuthnow, has conducted research into sociological trends that impact church membership and participation in organized religion. Those trends include:

- delayed marriage (Americans are marrying at a later age, on average) and increased divorce rates;
- fewer children born later in their parents life;
- less job security, therefore greater financial insecurity, making commitment less likely;
- higher levels of education, which decreases unquestioned belief;
- loosening relationships, resulting in less community involvement;
- globalization, producing less homogeneity and greater diversity; and
- the information explosion, which creates broader spiritual horizons and therefore looser religious identification.

“I think it’s clear that much of the problem organized religion faces today is not really the church’s fault,” Mercadante said. “We are experiencing a massive cultural shift that is extremely hard to keep up with and the church always lags behind these shifts...” too slowly, obviously, for some people.

But the church, as it has in all ages, has the spiritual resources to meet the hunger that is always present, Mercadante concluded. Our challenge is to bring all the church has to offer into this milieu and break the stereotypes that keep people away.

## **Sunday School Food Drive**

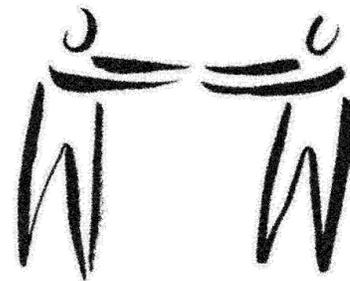
Thank you to all who have contributed to the Sunday School/Youth Group food drive. Remember that the food drive started up again the last Sunday in November.

## **Congratulations**

Congratulations to Amy and Todd Garcia on the birth of Evelyn Hope on Nov 20 at 7:20 PM. Evelyn (8 lbs.6oz; 21 inches long) joins big sister Rachel and big brother Ryan. Proud grandparents are Valarie and Ed Garcia.

## **From the Deacons**

The Board of Deacons of NHPC would like to thank all of our friends and members who recently



## **From the Deacons**

supported the church silhouette fundraiser project. Thirty pieces were sold. The Church received eleven dollars proceeds on each piece adding up to three hundred and thirty dollars. Due to your generosity and support, these small fundraisers have enabled the refurbishing of the Colonial Room. I think that all will agree that the change in the room is a most pleasant one. Again, thank you Wendy Keryk for researching the silhouette project and for your invaluable help.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the Thanksgiving baskets will have been distributed. We have already received substantial donations in canned goods; as well as in monetary donations. As always, the members of this church continue to be generous in sharing with those in need in our community. Thank you. A special thanks also to Carmen Bermudez and her team of supporters who helped with the shopping and organization.

During the Advent season, the Deacons have adopted a family in need with two small children. We will be asking for donations of clothing, small gifts for the children and food for a food basket. This is not through “People to People,” but rather a family in need that has come to our attention. More information on sizes, ages, etc. will be announced in the coming weeks.

A list of names and phone numbers of the current Deacons of NHPC is in the church directory. Please do not hesitate to call if a need arises for yourself or a loved one. It is our mission to serve you and comfort you.

## Art Show and Auction

In celebration of the 275th Anniversary of New Hempstead Presbyterian Church, and to feature the unique works of its members, the congregation will host an art show and in-house auction on Saturday, December 6 at 5 PM in Murchison Hall.

Several works will be auctioned, with proceeds benefiting New Hempstead Presbyterian Church. From acrylics to oils, the Art Show will feature some of the congregation's best works and will be sure to garner acclaim from both members and invited guests.

Also, anticipate a number of delightful door prizes.

Art lovers can view the exclusive pieces for \$12, which includes a delicious spaghetti dinner (\$10 for seniors and children).

Please call the church office for further information at (845) 354-2372.

## The Colonial Room

On November 9, 2008, the Colonial Room was rededicated to Robert Greenhalgh. In honor of that occasion, we thought it a good idea to look back at some of the history of the place.

The Rev. Albert Seiple was hired as our church's minister in 1929. This was long before the Tappan Zee Bridge was constructed; the community was very rural in nature. Our membership was made up mostly of farmers with small incomes. At that time, the congregation was very active. The church building was just the sanctuary portion of the present structure. Sunday School classes were held in the balcony and social events took place in either people's homes in the schoolhouse at the far end of the church property. The Rev Seiple saw a need and he approached the church's Christian Endeavor Society, which had 35 members, most of whom were young and eager. He encouraged them to make plans for a new room.

It took about a year to construct the back half of the current structure, and cost \$3,000. It was completed in 1932, in the middle of the Depression. The church took a loan of \$1,250 to help pay for it. The terms were a repayment of \$250 a year, to be split evenly between the Sunday School and the church. To pay for their half, the Sunday School started the first of the legendary lawn parties in 1933. The room was to be used as a Sunday School room and social hall. On the west side was a stage and on the east side where the present day office is, was a full kitchen.

Rev. Seiple passed away in 1933 and the church dedicated the room to him, calling it the Seiple Room. There is a plaque in the room under the clock to attest to this.

In 1947, the kitchen was doubled in size and bathrooms were added. Over time, the Seiple Room saw heavy congregational use. Many dinners and stage performances were held there.

Murchison Hall was built in the 1960s, creating a much larger social space and Sunday School classrooms. The Seiple Room was reconfigured to the present day form, with the stage being covered up by the bookcase and the minister's office being created in the backstage area. The kitchen was removed and the office, choir robe room and kitchenette created in that space. It was rededicated on July 7, 1970 and renamed the Colonial Room.

In 1974, an electrical fire broke out in the wall between the Colonial Room and the church, substantially damaging both spaces. Both were rebuilt but evidence of the fire can be seen in the scorch marks on the floor near where the piano sits today.

The Colonial Room remained in that repaired state until a year ago when the Deacons took on the job of remodeling the space. The woodwork was repaired, the ceiling and walls were painted; the wallpaper was replaced, and the wainscoting painted white. The carpet was taken up and the original floor refinished.

Many thanks need to be given to Wendy Keryk for her sense of the space and her decorating concepts. Also thanks to the Deacons for their fund-raising efforts and help with the work. Thanks go to Pam Fink for her drive to keep the project on track. And thanks to those who did the work – the Deacons, Steven Adom, Percy Crockett, Frank Ehlermann, Pam Fink and Mark Zacheis.

On Sunday, November 9, we rededicated the Colonial Room to Bob Greenhalgh. Bob has been a member of this church since 1974 but his association with the church goes back much farther than that. Bob has served as an elder of the church but his impact on the church goes much beyond that. He painted the cover art on the weekly bulletin. He built our special events sign on the front lawn and the wishing well on the great lawn. He rebuilt the front door woodwork. He has served as official and unofficial church historian for many years. But mostly Bob has served as the moral voice of history here, reminding us of where we come from and encouraging us to balance our present day needs with the character of the place.

A new plaque has been added to the room in Bob's honor.

### Nursery School Coming

As you know, the Rockland Community Nursery School, which had occupied Murchison Hall, closed this summer after 35 years in that location.

Peace Through Play, a Montessori-based nursery school in Chestnut Ridge, is opening "Peace Through Play North" in that location. They offer an all-day year-round program with an emphasis on cooperative learning, socialization and pre-academic skills looking at each child's individual abilities and growth.

More information is available at  
<http://peacethroughplay.com/>

### Welcome New Member

Welcome to Jack Landers who joined the New Hempstead Presbyterian Church on Sunday, November 23.



To order poinsettias, please return this form along with a check made payable to the New Hempstead Presbyterian Church (and marked Christmas flowers) to: 484 New Hempstead Road, New City NY 10956 by December 21.

Please purchase \_\_\_\_\_ (how many) poinsettias for me at \$15 each.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I (we) would like the poinsettias to be dedicated as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_ To the Glory of God \_\_\_\_\_ In Celebration of Christ's birth

\_\_\_\_\_ In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



*Newsletter of the English Church*

New Hempstead Presbyterian Church  
 484 New Hempstead Road  
 New City NY 10956



**DATED MATERIAL  
 DECEMBER 2008**



**Just for KIDS**

## The Story of Jesus' Birth

Jesus' birth is recorded in three New Testament chapters: Matthew 1 and 2, and Luke 2. Follow some important words about our Savior's birth by starting at a word beginning with the letter **A** and finishing with a word starting with the letter **Z**.



angels	Bethlehem	car	dance	easel
cat	bear	child	donkey	egg
fast	glory	flocks	Earth	feathers
gap	inn	jacket	grapes	quiet
hat	Joseph	King	only	righteous
shepherds	loop	Mary	night	unique
tidings	last	maze	paper	wise men
water	open	nest	word	excitement
young	zillions	saved by this baby called Jesus	zillions	young



Answer: angels, Bethlehem, child, donkey, Earth, flocks, glory, holy, inn, Joseph, king, Lord, Mary, night, only, peace, quiet, righteous, shepherds, tidings, unique, virgin, wise men, excitement, young, zillions (saved by this baby called Jesus)