



# The Carriage Stone

*November 2010*

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



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**The New Hempstead Presbyterian Church**

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# The Isaiah Vision: Evangelism & Church Transformation

By Clint McCoy, Executive for Partnerships

Raymond Fung does not use the catch phrase “missional church” anywhere in his little book *The Isaiah Vision: An Ecumenical Strategy for Congregational Evangelism*, yet he illuminates a vision for mission that can transform both church and community, derived from Isaiah 65: 20-23 (NRSV):

No more shall there be .... an infant that lives but a few days,  
Or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;  
For one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,  
And one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.  
They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.  
They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity,  
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord,  
and their descendants as well

Based on the text, Fung identifies a four-bullet “Isaiah Agenda” to which he believes not only the church, but others of good intention, can aspire. With these common hopes combined with the church’s invitation to neighbors to join in vital worship, Fung asserts that ministry that makes a huge difference both for church and community, becomes a form of evangelism when (p. 2):

- Children do not die
- Old people live in dignity
- Those who build houses live in them
- Those who plant eat the fruit of their labor

An interpreter with the Hong Kong Government Official Language Agency and former secretary for evangelism in the World Council of Churches’ Commission on Word Mission and Evangelism, Fung says that focusing mission invites others of good will, who care about the health and welfare of their community, to work hand in hand with the church for the common good. He asserts that we “will inevitably find ourselves asking one day: ‘What has the world come to that with all the resources the world has at its command and the tremendous progress it claims to have made, children are still dying in large numbers, old folk are increasingly left to their own fate, and working people go on getting a poor deal?’ No doubt, we may experience occasional support and friendship and even come across uplifting heroism. But we will never be able to escape from the weight of human indifference, selfishness, greed, stupidity and hypocrisy in the face of human suffering.” (p.12).

Through the Isaiah Vision, God calls the church to lead in our communities, to identify those places where we can make a difference in the lives of anyone who is vulnerable. Through developing relationships, and invitations to worship together to be nurtured for service, the church becomes a source of spiritual development, and a catalyst for human development in the community. How much different this is from the church that gathers periodically to engage in moneymaking dinners in the community in order to balance the budget.

If you are a congregational leader looking for a handle on church transformation, look to Isaiah 65, where God gives a vision of ways in which the church can make a difference, and the gospel comes to life. Where can you make the greatest difference in the life of your community?



## Hanging of the Greens

Advent at New Hempstead Presbyterian Church starts with the traditional hanging of the greens on Sunday, November 28. The whole family can enjoy this event because there are activities for everyone. Those wishing to help with the actual hanging of the greens should bring garden shears and gloves. In addition, freshly pruned evergreen branches are always welcome.

Volunteers for providing soups and sandwiches can contact Barbara Zacheis or the deacons to help fortify the folks who stay by providing a light lunch.

## Blessing of the Animals

Last month's blessing of the animals was a success—15 people and 13 critters were blessed. A good time was had by all.

## Congregational Meeting

The Session has called a congregational meeting for Sunday, October 31 in the Sanctuary after

Worship for the election of Elders and Deacons.

Please plan to attend. It is important that we elect officers early enough that they can receive training before the start of their terms.



## Annual Church ELECTION

## Benefits of Choir Membership

Bernice Rice Gerstein sends this column from *Spry* to remind us that new members are welcome at Choir rehearsal at any time.



**Join the Choir...**  
**You'll Be Glad**  
**You Did!**

## Healing Sounds

Whether you sing in your car or dance to your favorite tunes, music is good for your health. A rundown of the latest research:

- A review of 23 studies found that listening to music could decrease blood pressure, heart rate and anxiety levels.
- Blood samples taken from chorus members before and after they sang Mozart's *Requiem* showed increased levels of immunoglobulin A and cortisol, indicating enhanced immunity, say German researchers.
- Singers surveyed in a British study reported improved lung capacity, higher energy, asthma relief, better posture and enhanced feelings of relaxation and mood.
- Doctors at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston teach stroke patients who have little or no spontaneous speech to associate melodies with words and phrases.

## Worship, Music and the Arts

The Worship, Music and the Arts committee is meeting on Wednesday, November 3 at 8 PM in the Colonial Room. Discussion topics will include planning for Advent and Christmas.

## New Church Brochure

Barbara Zacheis has updated the church brochure. It describes our Worship, fellowship, Christian education programs as well as our Service and community outreach. Our 275-year history is also covered.

Copies are available in the Narthex. This can be a good way to help introduce the church to a friend or neighbor. In addition, we should make sure that any newcomer is offered one to let them know more about NHPC and to serve as a reminder of their visit.

## Approach of winter complicates Pakistan flood relief

October 5, 2010

As winter approaches, the summer monsoon-induced floods in Pakistan threaten to lead to more deaths and illness.

The flooding, which began in northern Pakistan and has spread to cover almost a quarter of the country, has affected more than 21 million people.



## Rescue Mission

About 1.8 million homes have been destroyed or seriously damaged, leaving about seven million people homeless. These people will be among those vulnerable to disease brought on by cold weather.

"Snow begins as early as October in parts of the north," said Dr. Qamar Zaman, medical coordinator for PDA partner Church World Service Pakistan-Afghanistan. "Winter is approaching, and with freezing temperatures there are a greater number of cases of lower respiratory tract infection."

In addition to respiratory infections, poor nutrition and food shortages put more people — especially children and the elderly — at risk of death this winter.



**PRESBYTERIAN  
DISASTER  
ASSISTANCE**

**OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE**

Government health care facilities have been widely damaged, leaving Pakistanis to rely on services provided by the UN and NGOs. NGOs are supporting basic health care units through infrastructure repairs, medical equipment and qualified staff, and by ensuring that essential medicines are provided at the sites.

PDA, as a member of ACT Alliance, is helping to provide free consultations, essential medicines and maternal and child health services at mobile health units. About 80 percent of patients are women and young children.

The units are also emphasizing education to prevent the spreading of water-borne disease. Another emphasis is WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene). As floodplains clear, the remaining water and animal carcasses might contribute to disease outbreaks. Because affected communities continue to live in temporary settlements, there is also an accumulation of waste, with no permanent water and sanitation facilities.

PDA is providing access to drinking water, sanitary facilities and emergency medical services, with a focus on the needs of girls, women and the elderly. Staff are providing hygiene kits, buckets, aqua tabs, water disinfectants and mobile water treatment units.

Along with its partners, PDA is providing shelter kits to some of the thousands of displaced families. These kits contain tents, blankets, plastic sheets, cooking utensils, jerry cans, oil lamps and oil.