

The Carriage Stone

June 2011

New Hempstead Presbyterian Church, New City, N.Y.
The English Church

Pentecost Offering

for Children at Risk, Youth, and Young Adults

Through the Pentecost Offering, the church expresses a common commitment to provide hope for children at risk, opportunities for youth and young adults to grow in their faith, and short-term mission service options for young adults.



Please give generously.



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"The Carriage Stone" is the Newsletter of

The New Hempstead Presbyterian Church

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Amendment 10A Passes



As many of you know by now, Amendment 10A has passed the number of presbyteries needed to make it part of our Book of Order. It replaces G-6.0106b, which reads,

“Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.”

With a majority of presbyteries (over 87 at last tally) voting for the change, the new language reads:

“Standards for ordained service reflect the church’s desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life. The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation shall examine each candidate’s calling, gifts, preparation and suitability for the responsibilities of office. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate’s ability and commitment to fulfill all the requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation. Governing bodies shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.”

(For the record, Hudson River Presbytery voted to affirm Amendment 10A on a ballot vote with very few dissenting votes.) As most of you know, I have supported the full inclusion of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) community my entire ministry. I am also aware there not everyone agrees with me, or with the passage of amendment 10A.

It is so important for us as people of faith to love one another, even—especially—when we disagree with each other. As people of Reformed faith, we believe that the Holy Spirit is at work when we listen prayerfully to one another, and exercise mutual love and forbearance. Speaking personally, I’m not going to quit loving anyone because they do not share my enthusiasm for this change to our Church polity!

The Session discussed this amendment at its stated meeting on May 18. I copy a letter from the leadership of our denomination regarding the passage of Amendment 10A. You will note that there are some links should you wish to read more about the issue. Should you wish to know more, or talk with me about this change, please do not hesitate to set up time when we can get together. I would love to hear from you.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori" with a stylized flourish underneath.



Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

May grace, mercy and peace be yours in abundance (Jude 1:2).

The debate about ordination standards has been a Presbyterian family struggle for much of the last three decades. We have sought to find that place where every congregation and every member, deacon, elder, and minister of the Word and Sacrament can share their gifts in ministry while, at the same time, the integrity of every congregation, member, deacon, elder, and minister is respected.

This year, the conversation has focused on Amendment 10-A that was passed by the 219th General Assembly (2010) and sent to presbyteries for approval. While we wait for official tallies, it appears that 87 presbyteries will approve 10-A during the week of May 9, which is the majority required for approval.

If this becomes official, the new language outlining the gifts and requirements for ordained service will say the following:

Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (G-1.0000). The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation (G.14.0240; G-14.0450) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation and suitability for the responsibilities of office. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Governing bodies shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.

This decision begins with an unequivocal affirmation that ordained office will continue to be rooted in each deacon, elder and minister's "joyful submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life."

This action also has important effects on our life together as a church, namely:

- in keeping with our historic principles of church order, each session and presbytery will continue to determine the suitability of individuals seeking ordination within its bounds.
- persons in a same-gender relationship may be considered for ordination and/or installation as deacons, elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament within the PC(USA); and
- all other church-wide standards for ordination remain unchanged.

Reactions to this change will span a wide spectrum. Some will rejoice, while others will weep. Those who rejoice will see the change as an action, long in coming, which makes the PC(USA) an inclusive church that recognizes and receives the gifts for ministry of all those who feel called to ordained office. Those who weep will consider this change one that compromises biblical authority and acquiesces to present culture. The feelings on both sides run deep.

However, as Presbyterians, we believe that the only way we will find God's will for the church is by seeking it together – worshiping, praying, thinking and serving alongside one another. We are neighbors and colleagues, friends and family. Most importantly, we are all children of God, saved and taught by Jesus Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

We hold to the strong affirmation that all of us are bound together as the church through Jesus Christ our Lord. “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all,” Paul wrote to the Ephesians (4:5-6).

It is Jesus Christ who calls individuals to ordained ministries, and all those who are called to ordained office continue to acknowledge Jesus as Lord of all and Head of the church. It is this same Jesus Christ who is the foundation of our faith and to whom we cling.

No doubt, there will be several news stories and other reports about this change in the days ahead. A number of resources, including frequently asked questions and liturgical resources, are available for you at <http://oga.pcusa.org/> Office of the General Assembly website. In addition, for those who wish to comment on or inquire further about 10-A, please contact ga.amendments@pcusa.org or call (888) 728-7228, x8202.

We invite you to join us in prayer:

Almighty God, we give thanks for a rich heritage of faithful witnesses to the gospel throughout the ages. We offer gratitude not only for those who have gone before us, but for General Assembly commissioners and presbyters across the church who have sought diligently to discern the mind of Christ for the church in every time and place, and especially in this present time.

May your Spirit of peace be present with us in difficult decisions, especially where relationships are strained and the future is unclear. Open our ears and our hearts to listen to and hear those with whom we differ. Most of all, we give thanks for Jesus Christ, our risen Savior and Lord, who called the Church into being and who continues to call us to follow his example of loving our neighbor and working for the reconciliation of the world. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Gradye Parsons

Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Cynthia Bolbach

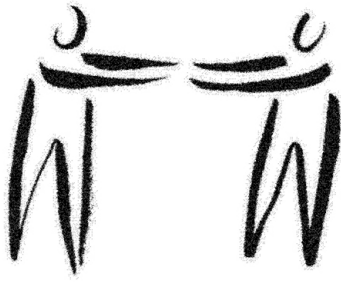
Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010)

Linda Valentine

Executive Director, General Assembly Mission Council

Landon Whitsitt

Vice Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010)



From the Deacons

The sale of the insulated and canvas tote bags will continue until June 19. Order forms can be found in the weekly bulletin and in the Colonial Room. All profits will go to the church.

The Deacons would like to thank all who have participated in the recent raffle drawings. Kim Deen has put together two beautiful baskets filled with gardening and summer items that have been enthusiastically received by the congregation. The profits from the sales go to the Deacons' fund to help with ongoing mission projects that serve our community. Many thanks to Kim for giving her time and talent toward the shopping and putting the baskets together.

To mark Pentecost Sunday, as well as the last day of Sunday school, a potluck luncheon will be held June 12 following services. It is hoped that the weather will cooperate so that all can enjoy some outdoor fellowship.

Pentecost Potluck

As mentioned above in the Deacon's report, there will be a potluck luncheon on Pentecost Sunday, June 12. We will be celebrating the switch to summer hours and honoring our new members from the Inquirer's class this spring.

Plan to bring a favorite dish to share. A sign-up sheet will be posted shortly.

Percy Crockett and Howard Whitehouse will be coordinating the luncheon.

Summer Music Opportunity

From Kryste Andrews, Music Director

Hard to believe it's that time of year already and the NHPC choir will soon be off for the summer! June 12 is our last Sunday. Of course, that means I'm looking for volunteers to present special music for the rest of June and all of July and August.

So . . .

If you sing or play a musical instrument and would like to share your talents on a Sunday morning, please contact me via phone, email (katalent@aol.com) or office mailbox with your musical offering. I look forward to hearing from many of you in the congregation who have been hiding your talent under the proverbial bushel!



Congregational Survey

Several of you have asked about the surveys we took back in April. We are still trying to get a few more folks, especially some of our young people to fill these out. At this point, it may be autumn before we get to work looking at the results and thinking about next steps.

Pastor Lori is currently working with Nauraushaun Presbyterian Church as part of a coaching team. She is learning a lot about the process of Creative Leadership for Congregational change, as Nauraushaun have volunteered to be the Rockland County guinea pigs! She will keep you posted on this exciting journey that we are sharing in Hudson River Presbytery.

We're on Facebook!

The New Hempstead Presbyterian Church has a Facebook page! Search for us, "like" us, let your friends know that you support NHPC.

Tag Sale and Open House

Thanks to all who helped make the tag sale and Sacred Sites Open House such a success. The sale raised over \$1300 dollars and more than a dozen people toured the church.

If you recall from the annual meeting, we budgeted \$3600 from fund raising, so this represents a sizable step toward that goal. There is also a modest income from the utility deal that some of you signed up for. This money goes into the fund raising budget line as well.

Women's Group

The new women's group continues to meet. Contact Carmen Bermudez or Jane Craig Sebok for more information about meeting times and places.

Pentecost Offering

The Pentecost Offering is received on the day of Pentecost (June 12 this year). It provides a direct way to meet the needs of children at risk, youth and young adults. Congregations are encouraged to keep 40 percent of the Offering to support ministry with children at risk in their communities.

The General Assembly's portion (60 percent) provides leadership development opportunities for Presbyterian youth and young adults and supports children-at-risk programs at the national level. Since 1998, Presbyterians of all ages have raised over \$7 million for these ministries that benefit younger members of God's family.



Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

From PC(USA) web site

The effects of this year's spring storms continue to affect many states. Severe storms and tornadoes caused widespread damage and destruction, especially in Alabama, Arkansas, Missouri and Mississippi. While much of the nation's focus has been on the devastation in Tuscaloosa, Birmingham and St. Louis, the damage throughout much of the Midwest and Southeast is extensive. Scores of smaller communities affected by the storms will also need assistance with their long-term recovery efforts.



Some areas have had to make hard choices – blasting levees and opening flood

gates to protect Baton Rouge, New Orleans and some smaller cities. Though the more populated areas are being saved, the water flowing into the flood plains has inundated millions of acres of farmland and affected many families in smaller communities.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has been working with presbyteries and synods in the affected areas as they work to determine the best response of providing immediate and long-term assistance for their communities. One Great Hour of Sharing funds have been provided, and members of the National Response Team (NRT) have visited to provide experienced disaster assistance as well as emotional and spiritual care.

PDA is thankful for the assistance of Church World Service (CWS) in providing Gift of the Heart Kits. CWS has shipped more than 11,000 Gift of the Heart Kits to storm-damaged areas in several states. The shipments are valued at \$55,000.