

The Carriage Stone

March 2012

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



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The New Hempstead Presbyterian Church

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A Whiff of Lent



The Christmas Feast is already a fading memory,
And already the mind begins to be vaguely aware
Of an unpleasant whiff of apprehension at the thought
Of Lent and Good Friday which cannot, after all, now
Be very far off

—W. H. Auden, “For the Time Being”

The seasons roll around and here it is, Lent again. While some find this a season of deprivation and theological hardship, I have always loved it. It is a time not so much for navel-gazing as for Jesus-gazing, “Looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2). It is a time to be intentional about spending time with Jesus, and following him more closely.



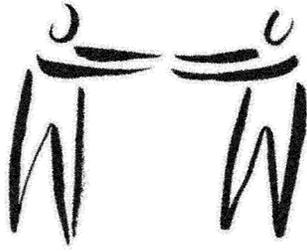
Rather than an “unpleasant whiff of apprehension” as Auden puts it, Lent is a time to delve more deeply into the incredible love of God for us—a love so profound that it involved Jesus’ suffering not just for us, but with us, whenever we suffer. And it’s not only our sufferings that Jesus shares, but our joys and triumphs, as well. Lent is a time to remember Jesus’ presence with us at all times—in joy as well as in trial.

The Gospels speak of a “Messianic Secret”—Jesus often tells his followers to say nothing about his miracle-working. Most scholars agree that this is because Jesus is not merely a magician or faith-healer. He is the Son of God, and his identity is most fully revealed in his suffering, death and resurrection.

I once had someone say to me, “I don’t go to Church on Good Friday—it’s too sad.” If we don’t stop at the Cross, if we don’t go with heavy hearts to the Tomb, we cannot be fully immersed in the joy of Easter, the unparalleled mystery of the Empty Tomb.

Lent is not a time to look for suffering, to torture ourselves. It is a time to recognize the presence of God in the darkness of our world in order that the dazzling Alleluias of Easter to be heard even more loudly.

Blessings for this holy season of Lent.



From the Deacons

The Board of Deacons of NHPC would like to welcome the newest members of our board. Mary Ann Witte and Thomas John have been welcomed members into our congregation in recent years. We are looking forward to working with them and sharing in their love for this Church.

Below is a thank you letter from the Pajama Program, Rockland County Chapter. It was such a pleasure to provide for the needs of this organization. Thank you, the congregation, for making this so successful.

Thank You

Thank you so much for your donation of 31 PJ's and 52 books! This is such a fabulous help to us for the children! Every day we receive so many requests from shelters and group homes where children are in need of warm pajamas that it seems like an overwhelming task we have taken on. Then we receive help from people like you and your [members]; within days, we can send out boxes and boxes of new pajamas!

The pajamas and books we send to children help them to feel loved and comforted when they lie down to sleep at night. On their behalf, I thank you again personally for sharing your love with them.



Sincerely, Cynthia Branca, Chapter President

New Officers

Thanks to the newly elected church officers:

Deacons Lona Asher, Thomas John, Liring Sullivan, Angela Tucker and Mary Ann Witte

Ruling Elders Pauline Mattis, Laura Metallo-Bidon and Robert Philhower.

We appreciate your willingness to take on a new challenge or to continue your service to the congregation.

Thanks for Your Support in Time of Need

Our Brother, Wayne Edward Williams, entered into his eternal rest on January 10, 2012, after a long infirmity.

The Crockett - Williams Family truly appreciate your many expressions of sympathy and caring. "Thank you" is such an inadequate term to reflect how much your thoughtful kindness meant to our family during our time of sorrow. Your many messages of concern brought us comfort. Your prayers raised our spirits and helped to buoy our faith providing us with inner peace. We will remember your kind deeds and gentle words for they touched our hearts.

May GOD bless us all.

Sincerely, Pat Crockett



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE.

*It's Remarkable What
Your Gift Will Do.*

\$150 can support a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Team member for a day while consulting with disaster-affected presbyteries.



One Great Hour of Sharing “What Can I Do?”

Laura Metallo-Bidon

If you're like me, you vividly remember television images of heartbreaking disaster in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, and devastating loss in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. More recently, 2011 was a historic year for weather-related disasters—including an earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan, and close to 1,500 tornados in the U.S., along with historic flooding in the Midwest. And, if you are like me, you have often asked yourself “What can I do to help?”

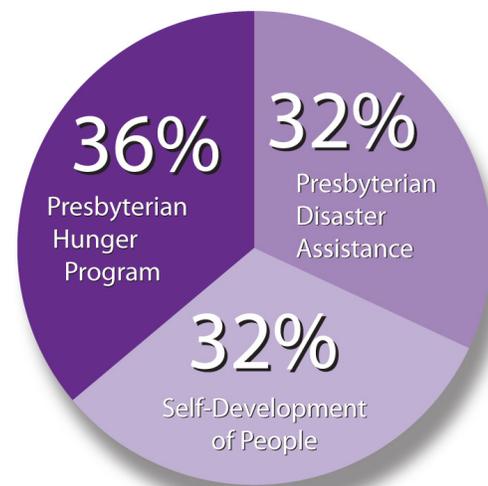
Since 1949, One Great Hour of Sharing has given us an answer to that question—a way to step forward and be part of the solution. By giving to One Great Hour of Sharing, you can know that you are making a real difference to those in need around the world.

Once again, this year, New Hempstead Presbyterian Church is participating in One Great Hour of Sharing. In the weeks ahead, you'll learn how your donations help in the immediate wake of disasters to provide food, water, medical care and shelter to those who have lost home and family.

But long after the headlines have faded, One Great Hour of Sharing continues to help: by partnering with groups like “Step One-Recovery” to re-build local fishing cooperatives in Louisiana, and by working with local farming

organizations to purchase indigenous seeds that allow for sustainable food production in Haiti. Your donations continue to help in these stricken areas long after the news cameras have left the scene.

What can you do? You can step forward to help. Please give generously to the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. Your gifts will help communities around the world, and help change lives for a lifetime.



[This chart shows how donations to the One Great Hour of Sharing are divided among relief agencies.]

Did you know that our church is older than pie charts? The first pie chart appeared in William Playfair's Statistical Breviary in 1801. He's also credited with inventing bar graphs, line charts and area charts.]

Whither the Surveys

From Pastor Lori Knight-Whitehouse

Last year, I invited the congregation to participate in a survey asking a variety of questions about how we felt about our church. Last year was, well, a year ago. What has happened to those surveys?

The surveys were to be a part of a “Six-Action Missional Transformation” of the local church, designed by The Missional Network. I spent several days at Stony Point Center training to facilitate this in our congregation.

Unfortunately, this did not pan out the way I (and many colleagues in Hudson River Presbytery) had hoped. Retrieving the raw data alone proved to be very difficult, and facilitating the next steps bamboozled me (and others!) completely.

Fortunately, Hudson River Presbytery was the “guinea pig” for this program; therefore, no cost was incurred by the local Church. This means all we lost was some of the pastor’s time.

While New Hempstead Presbyterian will not be participating in the program (indeed, only a handful of churches in the Presbytery have gone ahead with it), I am going to continue to try and retrieve the surveys from the Missional Network website so that we can at least have a look at what our members have said about their experience here at NHPC.



I continue to be so very proud of this congregation’s efforts to move into our neighborhood with the Good News of the love of God in Jesus Christ. The Deacons, the Mission committee and the Youth Group have been

working very hard to expand our witness in this community and the world. Together, we continue to find new ways to minister to and with our neighbors. Here is a sampling of the ways we are reaching out:

- Financial assistance to such organizations as the Rockland County Interfaith Breakfast Program and the Rockland Family Shelter
- Food for People to People
- Pajamas and books for children in shelters.
- The “Five for Five” offerings of the PC, USA
- We continue to provide space for several non-profits in Rockland County: AA, GA, a Dog Training Group, Smarty Pants Preschool and (beginning in May) a Meals on Wheels Senior Center.

So, while the program that began with the surveys did not lead in the direction that was hoped, the Holy Spirit continues to blow us out into our world. Thanks be to God!



The most common suggestion that I receive for the newsletter is that people want to read more about what is going on in the lives of others in the congregation. That means, of course, that you need to write about yourself so that others can read. Let us know of you have a joy, change in your life, upcoming concert, news from your children, etc.

If not for your fellow members, do it for Bob Greenhalgh. He likes to see his Milestones drawing in the newsletter!



Easter Flowers

Order form for flowering plants for Easter Sunday, April 8

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Please indicate the number and variety of plants you wish:

____ Easter Lilies @ \$15 ____ Daffodils @ \$15 ____ Tulips @ \$15 ____ Hyacinths @ \$15

Total # plants _____ Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

I (we) would like the plant(s) to be designated as follows:

____ "To the Glory of the Risen Lord"

____ In memory of _____

____ Other _____

All flowers must be ordered and paid for by **Sunday, March 25**. Please make checks payable to New Hempstead Presbyterian Church, clearly mark "Easter Flowers" and include this order form. Mail your order to the church office. (484 New Hempstead Road, New City, NY 10956)

You may pick up your plants after the 11 AM Easter Service.