

The Carriage Stone

April 2013

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



ALLELUIA!

CHRIST IS ALIVE!

Pastor

Pastor's Message 2
Credo Workshop 4

Mission

Helping Hands Thank You .. 3
Stony Point Family 4
Assistance Program..... 5
Helping Hands 5

Committees

From the Deacons..... 3

Life of the Church

Chamber Concert..... 3
Photos 4



"The Carriage Stone" is the Newsletter of
The New Hempstead Presbyterian Church

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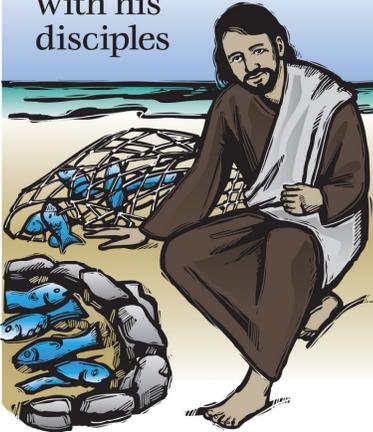
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Breakfast on the Beach

In John's Gospel, one of Jesus's first post-resurrection acts is to prepare breakfast on the beach for his disciples. This is an act of hospitality—the Lord of Creation cooks a meal of fish and bread for some of his disciples.

Preparing food for people is one of the most basic acts of love. How many of you remember your mother's chocolate cake, your dad's famous chili or your grandmother's spaghetti sauce? (My

Jesus has
breakfast
with his
disciples



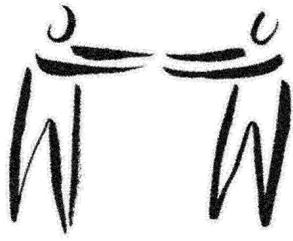
grandfather made a mean dozen of biscuits!) Our memories of family gatherings are often clustered around meals. It's like the Pillsbury Dough Boy used to say: "Nothing says lovin' like something from the oven."

By the time you read this, New Hempstead Presbyterian Church will have hosted our first Helping Hands meals for homeless guests. Some will have cooked. Some will have welcomed these men and women. Some will have kept watch like angels through the night so these people can know that they are sheltered safely through the night. In offering this basic hospitality, we are sharing in the welcoming of God. Each one of us has been invited into relationship with God by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. In sharing this welcome with others, we are showing the love of God.

As I write, I am so excited about this undertaking. To see so many people working so hard to welcome those who, like Jesus, "have no place to lay their heads," warms my heart and makes me so proud of this congregation. Thanks to all who have put together hygiene kits, bought groceries, cooked meals, welcomed guests, and spent the night in Murchison Hall so others could sleep with greater peace of mind. Special thanks to Laura Metallo Bidon, who has worked diligently to plan for this event. She has been busy since last summer to make this mission become a reality.

The Session hopes to make this practice a regular event in the winter months. As Jesus shows us in his breakfast preparations, hospitality is a primary mark of Christian discipline. It is a sign that we follow Jesus. In the months to come, join us as we welcome God's children for food, shelter and fellowship.





The Board of Deacons is looking forward to our annual Palm Sunday potluck luncheon. We will gather at Murchison

From the Deacons Hall immediately following the service on March 24 for an afternoon of food and fellowship. So bring a friend, a loved one and your favorite dish to share.

The Deacons are asking the congregation for ideas for a new mission project. We would like you to tell us about your favorite charity, organization or group who could use our help. From the suggestions gathered, we will have a drawing to select one worthy cause. There will be more information forthcoming in order to guide you through the process.

Throughout the year, we are very grateful to those members who help out during the weekly coffee hours. So many of you, without being asked, bring in delicious baked goods, refreshments, make the coffee (thank you, Jack) and help to clean up. For all of the kindness you show, the Deacons thank you.



**Chamber Music Concert
April 21 at 7 PM**

Members of the Hudson Valley Symphonic Wind Ensemble will present a concert of Chamber music to benefit NHPC and the wind ensemble in the NHPC sanctuary. Beethoven's Sextet for two clarinets, two bassoons and two horns will be featured, along with a variety of brass quintet pieces of several different styles. Please join us for an evening of fine music and light refreshments. Tell your friends!



Helping Hands Safe Haven at New Hempstead Presbyterian Church

Laura Bidon, Mission Committee Chair

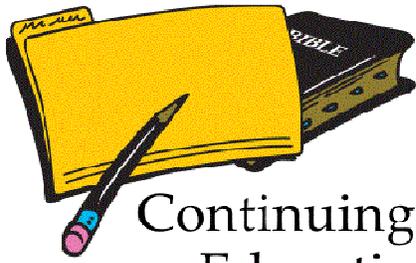
"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?...For I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people..."

Isaiah 43:19-20

For the first time ever, NHPC provided hot meals and overnight shelter to guests of Helping Hands. On Tuesday, March 19, we welcomed 16 guests, on Wednesday, March 20, we welcomed 20 guests and on Thursday, March 21, we welcomed 19 guests. Volunteers from the congregation prepared and served dinner, and were honored to dine with our guests. Each night, volunteers from the congregation also provided overnight chaperone. Each morning, our guests awoke at 6 AM, mopped the floors, emptied the trash and packed their bags before leaving for their day's activities.

It was a true labor of love, which would not have been possible without the prayers and support of our entire congregation. A special "thank you" to everyone who shopped, cooked, handed out hygiene kits, set-up for dinner, served and helped with clean up. Every hand was truly a helping hand.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if there were no need for Helping Hands? If every man, woman and child in Rockland County had safe, affordable housing? Can that dream ever become reality? Let us keep praying for that day. But until then, my sincere hope is that it will be a part of our ongoing mission to help our neediest neighbors by partnering with Helping Hands of Rockland County.



Continuing Education

Pastor's CREDO Experience Update

I had a wonderful, refreshing time away in Upstate New York March 4–11. I spent the time with around 30+ Teaching Elders (the new term for pastors) and a wonderful faculty of seven ordained Presbyterian Leaders. It was a time to withdraw from the sometimes-hectic pace of parish ministry and spend time with Jesus and leaders of the faith community. I was enriched by the care and compassion extended to all of us by the faculty, and by the deep relationships we very quickly formed. I came home with a renewed sense of call, and gratitude to God that my call is here with you.

Thank you to the Session and Congregation for allowing me this time away for prayerful, intentional work around body, soul, vocation and finance. (And I'm far less concerned that Howard and I will be retiring to a cardboard box one day.) Bless you all for the care and love you show me!

An Update on our Stony Point Family

On Sunday, March 3, NHPC Elder Carmen Bermudez visited our adopted Stony Point family to present them with a \$500 check on behalf of New Hempstead Presbyterian Church. This gift was made possible through your generosity, as well as a generous donation from the NHPC Board of Deacons. It will be used toward the purchase of a much-needed clothes dryer for Oscar, Rosa and their family.

For the past several months, NHPC has been helping Oscar and Rosa to replace some of their family's personal items that were destroyed or damaged by Hurricane Sandy. They have been



most appreciative and grateful for the donations of clothes, gift cards, and cash, as well as your ongoing prayers, support and well wishes.

Oscar and Rosa continue to face many challenges, as do the other residents of Stony Point's Ba Mar Mobile Home Park. Residents there are trying to figure out how new FEMA and town guidelines will affect them. These new guidelines require homes located in flood zones to be elevated to 12' above sea level. Ba Mar homes will need to be assessed and appropriate courses of action determined. Most of the families who live there will not be able to bear the costs associated with elevating their homes, if that is found to be necessary. Although the storm is long past, the families of Ba Mar still have a long road ahead.

Please keep Oscar, Rosa and all the families of Ba Mar in your prayers.

Photos

Part of our updated church web site is a set of photo galleries of church activities. I've added 91 pictures I have received over the years, mostly sent for publication in the newsletter. Viewing them, you can be reminded of fun times and recall the faces of members who have since been called home.

If you take pictures of NHPC activities or have some in your archives, please let me know so we can expand our galleries.

URL: nhpchurch.org/info/galleries

Cleaning

From Bob Philhower

In preparation for the Lord's Supper, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples who would be eating with him. I thought of this during the meal we hosted for Helping Hands last Wednesday. Now, I normally wouldn't be vain enough to compare myself to the Christ, but there I was squirting soap into the hands of our guests before they joined the buffet line to receive their meal in Murchison Hall. I was



Refuge
for the
Homeless

performing a similar function, helping them clean off the grime of their day.

Granted, I wasn't kneeling at their feet, girded with a towel, but I had been kneeling earlier as I prepared one of the bathrooms for their arrival. (Pro tip: when you're looking for a job to do, ask the person cleaning the bathrooms...he certainly does have a job for you!) As I scrubbed, I had recalled how fortunate I am to have a clean bathroom of my own. In fact, with Naomi away on a school trip, we have the luxury of 2.5 bathrooms for two people.

I guess the towel part came later when I was helping dry the dishes afterwards, sharing the company of my friends from New Hempstead. It was a privilege to work with all of you to extend this gesture of hospitality to the homeless in our community.

A big thank you to Laura, Mark, Lori and the Mission Committee for organizing the event; to those who shopped and who donated money; to those who showed up before me and prepared the tables and food; to those who spent the night as chaperones; and to the youth group whose example introduced us to this mission opportunity.



Christmas Joy Offering

Yes, the Christmas Joy offering was received three months ago, but its impact continues throughout the year.

One of the programs that benefit from the CJO is the Assistance program of the Board of Pensions, which assists pastors and church workers in times of need. When an urgent financial need arises for a church worker or his or her immediate family that personal and other resources cannot meet, the Assistance Program is able to help. Their report from 2012 highlights some of the ways in which they responded to the need.

In 2012, there were 489 grants for urgent financial need, totaling \$686,000. These include grants for families adopting children, sending children to college, facing emergency medical bills and other one-time expenses.

Financial assistance for retired workers totaled over \$4.5 million in grants to 623 people. In addition, vocational leadership programs helped 243 people. Among the programs is the CREDO program recently attended by Pastor Lori.