



The Carriage Stone

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

November 2014



Advent



"The Carriage Stone" is the Newsletter of

The New Hempstead Presbyterian Church

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Bells of Mindfulness

My Continuing Education retreat a few weeks ago was wonderful. Ghost Ranch in the high desert of New Mexico is truly what the early Christians in Celtic lands called a “thin place” –a place where earth and heaven are very close together.

The course I took was called “Soul Collage® As A Spiritual Path.” We began each session with a wonderful ritual. Our teacher, Kat Kirby, “rang us into the present moment” with a Tibetan Singing bowl. The bowl is struck with a mallet, and then the mallet is gently run around the edge of the bowl. A lovely, luminous tone fills the air, calling us to mindfulness of the present moment, and the Presence of the Holy.

Bells often have a ritual use. My friends Rev. Deke and Wendy Spierling have a lovely bell they strike before they thank God for the food at the dinner table. Deke refers to it as “the bell of mindfulness.” It is a lovely ritual which brings them (and Howard and I, when we are their guests) into the present moment—where God is.

We at New Hempstead do this every Sunday morning before we begin the worship service. Kryste gives that big ol’ rope several good tugs and rings in the hour—the hour in which we worship God as a community.

What ritual—of sight, sound, touch, smell or taste, can you think of to make a part of your prayer life? You might consider a bell to “ring you in,” to remind you that as you pray, you are stepping out of chronos—clock time; and into Kairos—God’s time.

Bells. They are not just for Christmas anymore!

Love, Grace and Peace,



News from Helping Hands

Helping Hands Interfaith Coalition is busy preparing

for their 11th year of providing safe shelter and supportive services to the homeless of Rockland County. Once again this season, New Hempstead Presbyterian Church will proudly partner with Helping Hands to provide safe haven and hot meals to our neighbors in need.

NHPC's scheduled safe haven dates for the upcoming season are:

February 5–6, 2015 and

April 15–17, 2015.

Mark those dates on your calendar!

In other news, Helping Hands continues to grow in its mission to help the homeless:

Helping Hands' **Gala Silent Auction and Dinner Dance** takes place Wednesday, November 12, and will honor the founders of Helping Hands and the original "Safe Haven" communities of faith; contact Kathy Lathrop at 357-3025 for tickets or more information;

New staff members: Ya'el Williams recently joined Helping Hands as Director of Program Services, and Nicole Wright joined in July as Case Manager in the Outreach Office;

Helping Hands recently received a **\$4,000 grant to purchase sleeping cots** and other sleeping gear for Safe Haven guests. These cots will provide a more sanitary and comfortable sleeping place for our overnight guests;

Helping Hands continues to need support and donations for the Outreach Center; they are currently in need of **liquid laundry detergent and new/gently used pillowcases.**

Donations may be dropped off at the Outreach Center (located in the lower level of United Church of Spring Valley) on weekday mornings between 9–11 AM. (To make alternate arrangements, please call Jean Barlow at 268-3170.)

Please contact NHPC Mission Chair Laura Metallo-Bidon if you would like more information or would like to make a donation to Helping Hands.

Will the PC(USA) become a Peace Church?

Laura Metallo-Bidon, Mission Committee Chair

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF) is a peacemaking organization affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, USA. For nearly 70 years, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship has urged the abolition of war and encouraged our sisters and brothers to work for peace in the midst of our broken world. The PPF offices are currently located at Stony Point Center.

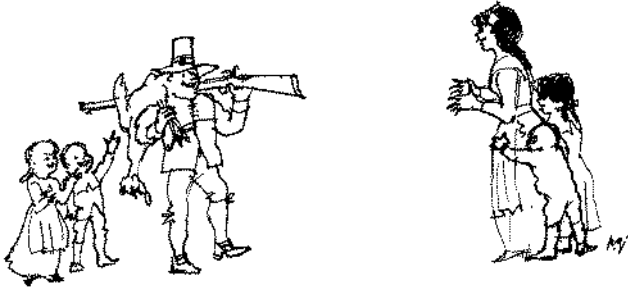
On Saturday, October 18, I was privileged to attend a PPF event at Stony Point Center, to honor the work of two peacemakers active in the PPF movement. As part of the celebration, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, author, and ordained Presbyterian minister Chris Hedges spoke on the "culture of war" and the future of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as a "peace church." He challenged us to consider the brutal realities of war, and its destructive effects—not only on our "enemies" but also on our own souls. Do we truly believe in Jesus as the Prince of



Peace, or will our culture of war and violence win the day? And what is the future of the Presbyterian Church (USA), without a true commitment to nonviolence and ending war?

Here's a link to Chris Hedges' thought-provoking presentation:

<http://youtu.be/f4iw765cK0o>



Thanksgiving Baskets

This year the Youth Group has assumed the responsibility of running the Thanksgiving Baskets program. Each year our church collects all of the fixings for Thanksgiving dinners and donates them to the needy. We partner with county social services and other contacts to identify those who might otherwise go hungry. On the Monday before Thanksgiving, the baskets are distributed.

Last year we collected thirty-five baskets and we hope to do the same or better this year. We're asking that each family donate an assortment of food to make a complete meal for a family of four and drop it off at the church by Friday, November 21 (please hang on to your turkey until Sunday, November 23; we do not have the refrigerator space to store all those turkeys). A list of recommended food stuffs (including a turkey, stuffing, boxed mashed potatoes, gravy, canned vegetables, canned soup, apple sauce, cranberry sauce, loaf of bread, cake mix and canned frosting) on a handy reminder card is being placed in the bulletins each week in November. Stick one in your purse or pocket and take with you the next time you go grocery shopping.

We believe the cost of the meal to be approximately \$40 but probably less if you shop the sales. If you would prefer that we do the shopping for you, you can make a cash donation; mark your check or envelope "Thanksgiving Baskets." There is a sign-up sheet in the Colonial Room, or you can let Howard, Mark, or a



member of the Youth Group know that you would like to contribute. And if you are unable to contribute an entire meal, any portion that you wish to donate is gratefully accepted.

In this land of excess, there are still plenty of people who are in need of a little help. Please be generous in your contributions to this long-standing mission project.

The Youth Group,

Katherine, Tommy, Andrew, Karl, Kyle,
Howard, Mark

Holiday Boutique

From the Fundraising Committee

The holidays will be here before you know it so it's time to get in shopping mode. What better place to start than at the church's second annual Holiday Boutique!



*Christmas
Boutique*

Be sure to stop by Murchison Hall on Saturday, December 6 from 10 AM–5 PM where you'll find lots of gift ideas. Start with some hot spiced cider and then

make your way through the vendor tables. So far, we have about 15 vendors signed up, bringing jewelry, cosmetics, housewares, wreaths and baked goods.

And hopefully we'll have the new church cookbook ready to go. If you get hungry, we'll have food to purchase for lunch, too!

As always, we're also looking for a few volunteers to supervise the church tables and to serve food. Please sign up on the sheet in the Colonial Room if you'd like to help out. And if you have any craft items or baked goods to donate, we'll gladly take them. So be sure to bring your friends and families to the Holiday Boutique!



Our Talented Congregation

Jane Craig Sebok

For the month of November, we have two listings. Remember to let me know when you have performances coming up,

either at janesebok20@gmail.com, or during coffee hour.

Here are the listings for November:

November 1 at 7:30 PM

November 2 at 3:00 PM

Barbara Zacheis – Hudson Lyric Opera, “La Boheme.”

Trinity Methodist Church, East Main Street, Stony Point, NY.

November 16 at 3:00 PM

Jane Sebok –

New Westchester Symphony Orchestra, Yonkers Library, Grinton I. Will Branch, 1500 Central Park Ave., Yonkers, NY.

Thanksgiving Dinner

Do you find yourself without dinner plans for Thanksgiving this year? Not planning on travelling over the river and through the woods to grandma's? Are you just tired of spending another holiday with your irritating brother-in-law? Why not try something different? Consider coming to our annual potluck Thanksgiving Dinner on Thanksgiving afternoon. Come for the food, the fellowship, the fun, and help us christen the new table in the Colonial Room this year! If interested, there is a signup sheet posted in the usual place; we ask that you sign up in advance so that we can be sure that all the major food groups are covered—turkey, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie.



From the Treasurer

Mark Zacheis, Treasurer

We kicked off the 2015 Stewardship Campaign with a presentation of the church's financial position as of the end of September 2014. Highlights of that presentation include that

- (1) actual pledge giving is running about \$3,000 behind budget and
- (2) the winter weather last year caused us to exceed our snow plowing and utility budgets by about \$7,000.

My bottom line prediction is that while we were budgeted to break even at the end of the year, the reality is that we will probably end up short by about the \$7,000.

There were two action items asked of the congregation. First, pledge statements for nine months have just come out. We're asking that you check yours and if it says that you are behind in your pledge, please try and get yourself caught up by the end of the year. Second, if you are caught up in your giving then please consider making an extra donation above and beyond your pledge. We're hoping that this way we'll be able make up some of the shortfall.

Pledge Card Sunday is November 23 and the Stewardship Committee team will be talking about next year's pledges on the Sundays leading up to that date. We have not asked you for an increase in giving in the past three years but have determined that we need to do so this year. Our property is costly to operate and capital campaign funds are no longer available to subsidize maintenance. Please give careful consideration to your pledge commitment for the coming year.

Hanging of the Greens

The first Sunday in Advent is November 30 and as is the tradition here, we will be decorating the church for the Christmas Season after the service that day.

We'll start at noon with a quick lunch, and then move into the Sanctuary. Many hands will make quick work and the result is always beautiful. So mark your calendar and plan on staying a little later that day.



Ten Things I Learned at Stony Point Center's First Annual Farm-to-Table Gala

- 1) The evening's theme: "Nothing fancy... just good folk." Just good folk doing good work to change the world. Which is, in truth, no small thing.
- 2) You can never have too many tomatoes! No kidding...this year, the Stony Point Farm harvested over 2000 pounds of this zesty vine-growing fruit!
- 3) Farm-to-Table really means: Farm-to-KITCHEN-to-Table! The cooks at Stony Point Center are really something special. After tasting the results, you'll be glad for that middle step!
- 4) Snapdragons are amazing. These multicolored flowers adorn SPC's fields, attract worker bees and bloom throughout the season. And they are still blooming!
- 5) Stony Point Center is more than a conference center... it's a living tradition. To be more accurate, it's a community of living Abrahamic faith traditions – plural!

- 6) KALE!! This "superfood" may be beyond the veil of things that you might automatically call "good..." until you've tasted it from the Stony Point Center kitchen!
- 7) CULTIVATING JUSTICE. Stony Point Center is not just cultivating peppers and basil -- they are cultivating justice and peace.
- 8) Stony Point Center makes their own bread — no preservatives or chemicals allowed!
- 9) BASIL!! Basil is a prolific spice on the SPC farm, offering flavor to savor.
- 10) Fall is gorgeous on the Stony Point Campus...you should stop by and see for yourself!

—Submitted by Laura Bidon;

Adapted from Stony Point Center's Facebook at:
<https://www.facebook.com/StonyPointCenter>

Be a Friend to the Terminally Ill

Shalvah means peace and tranquility in Hebrew. The mission of this volunteer program is to bring friendship and support to terminally ill residents at Northern Manor, Northern Metropolitan and Northern Riverview, three skilled healthcare facilities in Rockland.

Those who participate in the *Shalvah* project receive training that enables them to comfort a resident in the last stages of life. Ongoing support for the volunteers is an integral part of the project. The aim of *Shalvah* is to provide enough support so that no person in Northern Services Group's care dies alone.

To arrange for an interview or to learn more about the program, call Brenda J. Greenberg, director of volunteer services for Northern Services Group at (845) 426-6757.