



The Carriage Stone

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

December 2015



“The Carriage Stone” is the Newsletter of
The New Hempstead Presbyterian Church

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Advent Blessings

It is hard for me to believe that Advent is upon us—especially with the news of so many terrorist attacks in the past weeks. I find I am looking forward to this time of year even more, in light of the horrors of the world, because of its focus on the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ.

Were it not for our belief in the Incarnation, I would not be a Christian. The God who became human is the only God I can truly worship. Because God became fully human, God knows what our sufferings feel like—as well as our joys. By becoming a creature, the Creator hallowed (made holy) creation.

We might seek to get away from the commercialization of Christmas, run away from the world. But the coming of the One we will celebrate at Christmas reminds us that it is not in escape from the world that we find God, but in engagement with the world in God's name.

Fr. Andrew Greeley writes,

"It might be easy to run away to a monastery, away from the commercialization, the hectic hustle, the demanding family responsibilities of Christmas-time. Then we would have a holy Christmas. But we would forget the lesson of the Incarnation, of the enfleshing of God—the lesson that we who are followers of Jesus do not run from the secular; rather we try to transform it. It is our mission to make holy the secular aspects of Christmas just as the early Christians baptized the Christmas tree. And we do this by being holy people—kind, patient, generous, loving, laughing people—no matter how maddening is the Christmas rush..."

I pray that this Advent season will be, for all of us, a time of reflection, of drawing nearer to God as God draws near to us in Jesus Christ. May we remember that we are blessed in order to be a blessing.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori" with a flourish underneath.



Gloves, Gloves, Gloves for Our Neighbors in Need

From Laura Metallo-Bidon, Mission Chair

Share some warmth this Advent Season by donating winter gloves for our neighbors in need. NHPC is collecting gloves this holiday season, to be delivered to clients of the Salvation Army Canteen Food Program in Spring Valley. Men's gloves are most in need, since most of the individuals served by the Canteen program are young immigrant men looking for work. Bring them to Church by Sunday, December 13, so they can be delivered in time for Christmas.

The Salvation Army Canteen Food Program is a mobile breakfast program serving about 150 people in Spring Valley every Saturday morning 7–11 AM. A group of volunteers travels



the area in a truck, delivering food to folks in need. The weather is getting colder, and warm gloves will be a welcome addition to the food delivered by Salvation Army volunteers.

Remember our neighbors in need as you do your Christmas shopping. Purchase a pair of men's gloves, bring them to church by December 13, and share the warmth of the Advent season.

“Promises Made...Promises Kept”

God promised salvation—a promise kept with the birth of Jesus. In gratitude for that promise, the Christmas Joy Offering provides an opportunity to respond with promises of our own: to support church workers through assistance in their time of need, and to develop and educate racial ethnic leadership for the future of our church. Each gift represents a promise kept to both of these communities.

“Sharon’s Story” is just one of thousands that attest to the power of the promises supported by the Christmas Joy Offering. A retired church worker, Sharon has been battling advanced thyroid cancer for more than a decade. With growing healthcare expenses, Sharon found herself having to choose between paying for her medicine and buying groceries. Sharon’s pastor referred her to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. Thanks to generous gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering, Sharon received critical income supplements and can purchase necessary medicine and other essentials to manage her cancer.

“This is more than a physical blessing, but a deeply spiritual one for me.” With a self-described “attitude of gratitude,” Sharon believes in paying it forward. “This experience of generosity has empowered me to do for others. We are a connectional church and sometimes those connections save lives.”

– Sharon

With your generosity, we can continue to make and keep these meaningful promises with life-changing potential. Please give generously to the Christmas Joy Offering.



SPECIAL OFFERINGS
CHRISTMAS JOY



Holiday Boutique

The annual Holiday Boutique is just around the corner! We invite you to join us on Saturday December 5 between 10 AM and 3 PM to visit our vendors in Murchison Hall and check out all of the beautiful (and tasty) things they have to sell. And of course, every visitor gets a cup of hot spiced apple cider to take away the winter chill. The Boutique is a great place to find that special gift to give for the holidays.

We'd love to have you come and shop, but if you can spare some time to help run the church table or to help set up and clean up, we're still looking for volunteers. Happy Holidays!

Interim General Presbyter

The Transition Team

We are pleased to announce that Rev. Gavin Meek has accepted the position of Interim General Presbyter. The Transition Team/search committee was particularly impressed by Gavin's seventeen years of experience as an Interim Pastor, his enthusiasm for helping organizations navigate transition, his love for learning and his experience training other interims over the past eight years.

We look forward to Gavin joining us at the Presbytery meeting on December 8, and beginning his work among us after the first of the year.

Our Talented Congregation

Jane Craig Sebok



For the month of December, we have four listings. Remember to let me know when you have performances coming up, either at janesebok20@gmail.com, or during coffee hour.

Here is the listing for December:

December 5, 2 PM – Jane Sebok –
Rockland County Concert Band,
“Holiday Concert.”
Central Presbyterian Church,
89 Hudson Avenue, Haverstraw, NY.

December 6, 4 PM – Barbara Zacheis
Hudson Valley Symphonic Wind Ensemble,
“Holiday Concert.”
Tarrytown House Estate,
Mary Duke Ballroom, Tarrytown, NY.

December 12, 6 PM – Jane Sebok –
Rockland County Concert Band,
“Fundraiser for Tuxedo Food Pantry.”
St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 10 Fox Hill Rd.,
Tuxedo Park, NY.

December 20, 3 PM – Jane Sebok –
Rockland County Concert Band,
“Holiday Concert.”
Pearl River Public Library,
80 Franklin Avenue, Pearl River, NY.