



The Carriage Stone

October 2019

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



We're a
Matthew 25
church

pcusa.org/matthew25



"The Carriage Stone" is the Newsletter of

The New Hempstead Presbyterian Church

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Sunday, October 27

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Pilgrimage

I was fortunate to fulfill a long-held desire last month: I got to go to the Island of Iona, off the western coast of Scotland. It was a pilgrimage I had wanted to make for many years, and was overjoyed to get to go with my sister-in-law, Anne.

John Inge, Bishop of Worcester, says this:

*Pilgrimage is a journey to sacred places.
Every place has a story, and sacred places are those'
whose story is associated with God's self-revelation
with the lives of the holy....*

Iona is such a sacred place. The abbey and monastery there were founded by St. Columba when he arrived on the island in 563 C.E. after being banished from Ireland (long story). It was destroyed during the Reformation, and rebuilt in the 20th century.

Iona is a beautiful place, a place where Christians have come to feel closer to God for centuries. I'm not sure it was Iona itself that helped me feel God's presence. Rather, it was the shared journey with my sister, and sister in Christ: the joint appreciation of the glorious landscape; the incredible food; the shared holy conversation (and some more worldly conversation—I am married to her brother, after all).

Pilgrimage is a metaphor for our lives, and for our walk with Christ. Life with Christ is never meant to be easy, but it is meant to be joyful. Whenever we would hit difficulties (usually involving me having my wheeled suitcase fall over, to some swearing on my part) we would remind each other that a pilgrimage is never easy.

We here at New Hempstead share this pilgrimage of life on earth. We are blessed to share our lives, our joys, our sorrows, and often some very good food! May we continue to share this walk of faith, and may we continue to invite others to join us. As Ram Das said, "We are all just walking each other home."



From the Deacons

Who Else Needs to be Fed

Lord knows, this congregation loves to eat! And if the event has food, chances are good that a Deacon was involved. Think about it: Weekly Coffee Hour – done by the Deacons. Our Welcome Back and Palm Sunday Luncheons—organized by the Deacons. Even our Communion table is supplied and set up by the Deacons.

All those activities involve our love of food, and the way that food brings people together. The Deacon ministry is one of caring and hospitality. At New Hempstead Presbyterian, that means bringing people together over food, feeding one another physically as well as spiritually.

Come to think of it, a lot of other activities of our church focus on food as well: The Mission Committee feeds the homeless at the Warming Center in Pomona; we have our ongoing food collection for People to People; several members of our congregation serve dinners to needy folks in Nyack through Soup Angels.



LOCAL MISSIONS

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Feeding people physically, as well as spiritually. It's a recurrent theme in this church.

Looking ahead, one thing the Deacons would like to accomplish is to expand our ministry of caring and hospitality; to expand the circle of people that we feed.

One idea for next year is to expand our Welcome Back Luncheon to include all the groups who use our facilities – the Churches, Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, and all others—for a wider circle of community welcome.

Another idea is to hand out coffee and cookies to students at Rockland Community College, to support them through final exam week. Or free coffee at the Spring Valley train station or one of the busy commuter parking lots in the area. Spreading the love of Jesus, one cup of coffee at a time.

These are just some ideas. But we need your help and participation if we want to expand our circle of hospitality.

If you want to help with a Coffee Hour, ask a Deacon. Say “Yes” when the Nominating Committee comes asking you to be a Deacon (don't be afraid of doing Coffee Hour; there are always plenty of hands to help!).

Think how much we can grow in sharing our hospitality with one another, and how we can expand our circle of caring to the wider community, with your involvement.

Just ask yourself: *Who else needs to be fed?*





Musical notes from NHPC

From Lois Anderson, Music Director

Sunday, November 17 will be a Taizé service. What is Taizé? Here are some notes about the music written by Stephen Barany:

Taizé music comes from the Taizé Community, a French ecumenical religious community founded in 1940. It is a prayerful form of music known for its simple, yet rich and meditative character. Taizé music often takes the structure of an ostinato (a simple melody that repeats over and over) and is meant to serve as a kind of musical centering prayer. Because Taizé music itself is intentionally simple, it provides a great way to move our prayer from the head to the heart.

What is a Matthew 25 Church?

From PC(USA) website

What is a Matthew 25 church?

Matthew 25:31–46 calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. Convicted by this passage, both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) exhorted the PC(USA) to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.

How the vision unites all Presbyterians

By accepting the Matthew 25 invitation, you can help our denomination become a more relevant presence in the world. We recognize Christ's urgent call to be a church of action, where God's love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And we rejoice how our re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common

and holy purpose: our common identity to do mission.

About the Matthew 25 mark



The circular shape represents unity and equality. Like God, a circle has no beginning and no end, and it symbolizes our continuing effort to help one another. The shape also suggests a globe that points to our engagement with the world.

The three interlocking figures represent the equality of all people without gender or race bias. They have their arms around each other, symbolizing friendship, protection and service. The number three suggests the three focus areas of congregational vitality, structural racism and systematic poverty, as well as the Trinity.

The color palette is bright, lively, friendly and energetic — suggestive of our active commitment.

Finally, the legend “Matthew 25” below the symbol is the literal identification of the mark. We use a handwritten font to make the point that active engagement in the world requires human effort.