



The Carriage Stone

March 2021

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



Holy Week



"The Carriage Stone" is the Newsletter of

The New Hempstead Presbyterian Church

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Christianity: An Odd Religion

(Note: this is a repeat from 15 years ago. I thought it was worth sharing again. --Lori)

As I write this, we are fast approaching the holiest day of the Christian year: Easter. Easter was the first feast-day in the early Church, and it celebrates the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We who grew up in the Christian faith take the resurrection for granted. It's part of our faith, and we seldom question it. But there are folk who do question the idea of a bodily resurrection from the grave.

I take such questions very seriously, because I believe they point to something often forgotten. Christianity is based on what is, quite frankly, a bizarre notion: the idea that one dead Jew isn't dead anymore.

There are many ways to understand the resurrection, and I am quite happy to let Christians believe what they feel led to about it. But let me share with you why I believe that Jesus was raised, physically, from the grave.

If Jesus was raised from the dead, he was dead in the first place. He didn't just go in to a swoon on the cross, and later recover from it. He genuinely suffered all the pain of a barbaric form of execution. And he knew the physical experience of death.

If Jesus was physically raised from the dead, bodies matter. We often think of Christianity as a world-denying, body-denying, physical pleasure denying religion. It's not. Our physical bodies matter to God (though I must admit, in the life to come, I hope there is no cellulite.) We can be comforted to know that a part of the Godhead is human, and knows what human physicality is like, with both its joys and its pains. Scripture records that when Jesus was seen by Thomas, the doubting disciple was able to put his fingers in to the wounds of Christ's Passion. Jesus' resurrected body still bore the marks of his suffering. Our suffering matters to God, and though God heals our wounds, the scars remain to show that in all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (Romans 8:37). The wounds we carry now will be transformed into warrior marks, signs that in Christ we have overcome all that would seek to destroy in us. As you can tell, I happen to believe this crazy claim that Jesus came popping out of the grave like a Sidewinder missile. But there are many ways to understand Resurrection. You don't have to agree with my take on it to be a faithful Christian. What matters most is that we as individuals and as a Church community LIVE in this resurrected life offered to us by our gracious God through this gift of Easter. We are an Easter People. Thanks be to God.

Easter Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori" in a cursive script, with a flourish underneath.



Easter Flowers

Order form for flowering plants for Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021.

Name:

Phone:

Please indicate the number and variety of plants you wish:

- Easter Lilies @ \$15
- Daffodils @ \$13
- Tulips @ \$12
- Hyacinths @ \$14

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 March 14**. Please make checks payable to **New Hempstead Presbyterian Church**, clearly mark "Easter Flowers", and include order form. Place your order in the offering plate or email the church office at office@nhpchurch.org.

You may pick up your plants after the 11:00 AM Easter Service.

Holy Week Schedule

From Sue Rentz, Chair
Worship, Music and the Arts

Our Easter Season of worship services and activities is going to look a bit different this year due to COVID 19 safety concerns.

Palm Sunday -- Since we are still only allowed 25 people at a time in our sanctuary, there will be a sign-up sheet posted in the Narthex for you to use. The service will also be streaming on our website, as usual. Due to COVID concerns, we will not be having our usual potluck luncheon.

Maundy Thursday -- This will be a hybrid service as we have been doing for several months now -- some people worshipping in church and some virtually.

Good Friday -- The service will be provided on our website by the Hudson River Presbytery.

Easter Sunday -- As mentioned above for Palm Sunday, there will be sign-up sheet in the Narthex. And again, sadly, there will not be an early service and breakfast or an Easter Egg Hunt.



Despite these circumstances, we can still joyfully and safely celebrate our risen Lord together!

Sing a Hymn for Easter

From Lois Anderson

If you miss congregational singing, here is your chance to sing a hymn, virtually! "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" is #123 in the hymnal. For instructions on how to join in this Easter video, along with the choir and brass musicians write to

newhempsteadpresbyterianchurch@gmail.com

All are welcome.

Fellowship Committee

From Nancy Jacobs, Chair
Fellowship Committee

The NHPC Fellowship Committee Meeting had its first ZOOM meeting of the year February 10. The (grinning) elder who lead the meeting was very pleased with the creative ideas the group proposed.

We are looking at online events to host for the near future and outdoor events (socially distanced) to host in the Spring and Summer. Some ideas that would encompass other NHPC Committees goals were also discussed.

We hope to provide 2-4 weeks of advance-notice for each event. You can be most assured of receiving the invitations if you confirm your currently used email address with the editor of the Carriage Stone (the NHPC newsletter), Robert Philhower (rphilhower@nhpchurch.org), or the elder who heads the Fellowship Committee (that's me, Nancy Jacobs at nancy_jacobs@icloud.com)

If you received a link to this newsletter through an email from the church, you can change your address by clicking "update your preferences" at the bottom of the email. If you are not receiving emails from the church, you can sign up on the church website: https://nhpchurch.org/info/?page_id=121 using the "Subscribe to Newsletter" form.



Millennial Corner

From Nora Asamoah

During this period of lent, I decided to do something different. Instead of giving up something (usually social media or chocolate), I decided to practice what lent means to me. It is a time of repentance, a time to get closer to God (through fasting and praying) and a time of gratitude. John 3:16-18 tells us of God's love for us. He loved us (sinners) so much He gave up His only Son, to be crucified on the cross, so that our sins will be wiped clean and we can have everlasting life with God. How wonderful is this news! During this period of lent, I am planning on being grateful for this gesture by God. I do not know about you but knowing that despite everything (including my sins), God still chooses me makes my heart grow bigger. So, I ask you brothers and sisters in Christ, as you celebrate the season of lent, do not forget to express your gratitude to God.

Star Word Invitation

From Nancy Jacobs

Early in 2020, Pastor Lori provided the congregation with an opportunity to meditate on a word, which we randomly selected from a basket. My word for 2020 was "invitation". I taped my word to the top of my medication organizer box, and it has been there ever since, present to me in the morning during breakfast and my quiet time.

The year 2020 has been, for 9 months, a year in which we have been requested, or recommended, or challenged NOT to invite people to be close to us, into our homes. Honestly, it is much more of a challenge to me to consider inviting than not inviting people. People who know me well know that I don't invite others over to my home often. If I have had anyone into my home even once each year that I've lived here, it would be surprising to me. So, invitation of THAT sort is a challenge to me, and I have to admit that I groaned when I saw the word that I had selected from the basket. But there have been other opportunities for me, for meditation on "invitation": Invitation to accept responsibility for doing more of God's work... Invitation to the monarch butterflies, to come and drink nectar from the flowers in the church gardens, and to lay eggs on the milkweed in the Monarch Garden,...

I'd like to invite you to consider what word has been a big part of your 2020, whether it was

one, which -like me - you chose from the basket early in 2020, or another, which God has, for some reason, brought to you. I invite you to share with us, your brothers and sisters, how you have come to view that word during the past year. Writing a short newsletter article might help you to meditate on and organize your thoughts, and I'd love to read about it....

WE'RE ALL IN THIS *Together*



All donations are tested for COVID-19 antibodies.
Plasma from antibody-positive donations may help current coronavirus patients in need.

Martin Luther King Blood Drive

110 Bethune Blvd., Spring Valley, NY 10977
Multi-Purpose Center Rooms

Saturday, March 6, 2021
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Schedule to donate at www.RedCrossBlood.org
and use sponsor code: MLK

New donors NEEDED!
Your donation can save up to THREE lives!



Download the Blood Donor App to day. Get your digital donor card, schedule your next appointment, track your lifetime donations, view your blood pressure, and follow your donation on its way to a hospital.

Schedule a blood donation appointment today:
Download the Blood Donor App | RedCrossBlood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767

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