

# The Carriage Stone

February 2025

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



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

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*34 “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. 35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”-John 13:34*



*22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. 24And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. -Paul’s Letter to the Galatians 5:22-25*

Sadly, there is a lot of misinformation out there. It is repeated so often, thanks to social media, that a person can start to believe it. Tell people the 1+1=3 long enough and suddenly that is a new truth. This as we have learned is very effective. Facts apparently are now opinion.

It becomes important then for people to be vigilant when sorting out truth from fiction. Tolstoy, his book *A Confession* wrote and I’m paraphrasing here. “I have no doubt that there is truth to the teaching, but it is also certain that it contains a lie. And I must find what is true and what is false and must disentangle the one from the other.” This is more important than ever, especially as followers of Jesus, because so many people and politicians are claiming their truths as God’s truths.

Early on in my Facebook days I read a post that I wanted to be true. I can’t remember the details, it was so long ago, but I remember it reflected my beliefs about a politician with whom I disagreed and so I reposted it. Something did not sit right about it though, and so I took the extra step to fact check it only to discover it was not true. I deleted the post and vowed never to post anything again without first disentangling the truth from the lie.

As Christians we must do the same. We need to be able to speak truth, with love to those who use the Bible to justify their positions...especially those which hurt and discriminate against others. Tolstoy also reminds us “Wrong does not cease to be wrong because the majority share in it.”

Yet, how can we embark on this truth-telling mission without succumbing to our own self-righteousness? The answer is both simple and difficult. We need to remain faithful to the core message of the Gospel while at the same time doing so with humility. We need to remind people of the message Jesus lived and died for at the same time listening to the concerns of those with whom we disagree. We need to be humble and willing to be wrong when we are so and change our behaviors in accordance with new knowledge.

The good news is we have guidance from the teachings of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. We need to be tireless in reminding people about the main focus to Jesus' message: love...a radical, all-inclusive love that included love of one's enemies. We also need to remind people how Jesus over and over again refused to accept earthly power. He was not interested in becoming a new emperor. He consistently rejected this temptation. Remembering this we refute the claims that any nation or people or even religion represents Christ. As Rob Bell so brilliantly observed in his book, *Love Wins*:

“Jesus is **supracultural**. He is present within all cultures, and yet outside of all cultures. He is for all people, and yet he refuses to be co-opted or owned by any one culture. That includes any Christian culture...We can point to him, name him, follow him, discuss him, honor him, and believe in him—but we cannot claim him to be ours any more than he's anyone else's.” Claiming Jesus is for America only is the agenda of Christian nationalism and is one of the biggest threats to our faith. We must resist the temptation to succumb to its appeal. Be as patriotic as you like but don't think for a minute God agrees with you. We must call out any heresy that corrupts the message of God's love.

Again, Rob Bell observes: “Jesus did not use hell to try and compel "heathens" and "pagans" to believe in God...He talked about hell to very religious people to warn them about the consequences of straying from their God-given calling and identity to show the world God's love.”

My beloved, let us never forget Jesus' commandment: and the guiding principles of the Epistles: People will know us by how well we love...and the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Keeping these truths in mind we can evaluate the messages bombarding us. Does the rhetoric we hear promote love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? Or is it designed to sow the opposite? Do the policies aim to relieve the burdens of the least among us or are they designed to play upon our own self-serving bias and prejudices? Do they build bridges or seek to divide?

The choice is ever before us. May we be guided by the Holy Spirit and be courageous enough to choose love.





## Installation

This coming Sunday, January 26, Pastor Angela will be installed as our full-time minister. The installation service will begin at 4pm in the Sanctuary. Immediately following the service, there will be a reception/dinner in Murchison Hall.

## New Adult Education Opportunity: Monday Morning at the Manse

Beginning Monday, February 6 we will meet at the Manse from 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM to discuss a variety of topics on ways we can make our faith relevant in today's world.

We will begin with a study of the book:

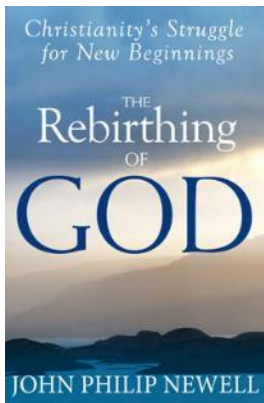
[\*The Rebirthing of God: Christianity's Struggle for New Beginnings\*](#) by John Phillip Newell.

I will be on a pilgrimage to the Iona Abbey in Scotland led by the author in April. My hope is to share my experience with the congregation beginning with this study.

I will also be leading an online evening discussion with the day and time to be determined.

All are welcome to join...invite a friend...

For more information contact Pastor Angela.



## Church Officers

Thanks to David Garcia and Karen Martin who were elected to the Session on January 12. Thanks to Jane Sebok and Syenni Lucas who agreed to continue to serve as Elders for three more years.

The Nominations committee is looking for people to serve as Deacons for 2025. If you have questions or are interested, speak to a Deacon or to the pastor.



## Per Capita Offering

Per Capita is the money that our church pays to help support the greater Presbyterian Church in the US. Our funds go to support our Hudson River Presbytery, our Synod of the Northeast, and the General Assembly.

Like our individual pledging to NHPC, per capita is the way that our church pledges to the Presbyterian Church. It is our way of saying, "We're in, we're part of this denomination and we intend to support it."

The first envelope in your box is the blue one, marked Per Capita. We encourage you to submit \$41 for each church member in your family.

## Decorate Your Cupcake

February 22 at 2 PM  
Come watch the movie *INSIDE OUT 2* and eat a cupcake (or 2!)

What could be better than a Strawberry cupcake with pink frosting and sprinkles, decorated by me?? Come see. Decorate "Your Way" and enjoy the movie matinee.





## Hanging of the Greens

From Karen Martin

NHPC is an old building almost all-stark white inside. Yet the first week of Advent, on December 1, this year, our tradition of decorating the sanctuary with garlands of pine, cedar, and other greens, made it warm and inviting: set us up for anticipation and preparation for the birth of Christ.

Music, laughter and Secret Santa (don't tell Gianna) filled the hearts of those who stayed after service, setting the atmosphere for the Advent Season. Next year, come stay a while. Hum along and tie a few red bows!





## Ringling the BELLS (quietly)

What is this? Last year, the Mission Committee broadened their scope and adventurously reached out to the Salvation Army, asking to join the army of bell ringing on every street corner. Our second year, on December 21, we strategically requested the corner near the Cheesecake Factor and “hung out!” Dressed in antlers and light bulbs, we attracted (quietly) the attention (and money) of passers by!

Fellowship and Mission come in many forms and actions. Plan to come share yourself next year on the corner! What’s with (quietly)? We were told no bell ringing! So we did it (quietly)!

