

The Bell Tower

March 2015

NEDERLAND COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of caring friends and neighbors . . . growing to live our motto: *open doors, open minds, open hearts*



New Worship Series

Our next worship series, for Lent, Holy Week and Easter is “Where Is God?”

Of course God is everywhere, but some places sure seem more spiritual than others, where the veil between heaven and earth runs ‘thin’. Some of us have special places or situations, where we find it easiest to reach out to God.

Perhaps for you silence is key, or maybe music draws you up. The Bible often talks about holy moments on mountaintops, in deserts, or even in caves; but many folks find a depth in ornate sanctuaries, or even in little brown churches...

Jesus said that he would be there, wherever two or three are gathered, although others hear his voice better in solitude.

Where is God? In our heart and in the world. Where is God? With those in need, and with those who praise. Where is God? Come share your ideas, from 1 March through Easter on 5 April.



Compassion - A Piece of Cake?

— Gary Ennor

Wednesdays were field trip days at the school where Pat taught in Illinois in the early 70’s. On one of those days an older boy was fed up with being asked to set a good example for the younger children.

“I don’t want to be an example,” he complained.

“What you want doesn’t matter,” the teacher

Continued page 2, Column 1

Holy Week at NCPC

2 April, 7 p.m. – *Maundy Thursday* honors the Last Supper Jesus shared with his closest disciples. Similarly, we will worship with fellowship and food, around tables together.

3 April, 7 p.m. – *Good Friday* is a solemn time of prayer, as we remember Jesus’ passion on the cross, and ask for the strength to get through our own struggles.

5 April, 8:30 a.m. – There’s no better way to kick off *Easter* than a Pancake Breakfast!

5 April, 10:00 and 11:15 a.m. – In order to accommodate all our neighbors who want to celebrate the fact that hope will always rise, even from the grave, we are again going to have two *Easter* services. (Last year, the first one was packed, and the second sparse, so you might consider sleeping in and trying out the later option.)

Dark and Lovely

The hot thing online right now is figuring out whether a certain dress is blue/black or white/gold. If you haven’t seen it, don’t get caught up in the madness. Instead, here is an issue of color and perception that really matters, for people of faith and all who care about racial justice. Song of Solomon 1:5 tends to be translated something like, “I am dark BUT lovely,” while the Hebrew is pretty simple and

Continued page 3

Mountain Housing Assistance Program

Perhaps you saw Hansen’s article in the Mountain Ear from 12 Feb (themtnear.com/2015/02/housing-as-a-moral-issue). Our town and the mountain area surrounding it has a housing crisis, and a few people who care about that are banding together to respond.

We are starting a non-profit organization called *Mountain Housing Assistance Program*, with the goal of “providing sustainable and fairly priced mountain living.”

Continued page 2

Two Opportunities for Parents

— Hansen

Let me be the first to say, I don’t know much about parenting. I’ve seen plenty of bad strategies, and I also know some parents who do an amazing job. But the guy with no kids has no room to give advice... However, I can work with other parents to offer some neat programs.

First, I’d encourage anyone with children to consider coming to the *High Expectations* event, at the Community Center on 4 March (The FREE dinner starts at 5:30, then the program at 6:00.) This is a chance for parents, with children 9 and above, to explore the myths and facts around marijuana, with a comedian and national educator, as well as a panel of local experts. We live in an area where pot is nearly ubiquitous, and that can be hard for young folks, especially complicated if the adults in their life aren’t on the same page. Here is a chance for people on all sides of the issue to gain techniques for helping those kiddos make life-affirming choices. (Read more at Hansen’s article in the 26 February issue of the Mountain Ear!)

Second, there are a million things you parents could worry about. On the really, really big dangers, wouldn’t it help if someone could navigate with you the sorts of things to look out for and the kinds of questions to ask? With a few other local organizations, NCPC is sponsoring a Parenting Safe Children workshop, to “empower adults to keep children safe from sexual abuse.” When you come to the church on 9 May, 10-2, you’ll learn how to teach and reflect with kids about body safety, what to be aware of with the schools and clubs your kids take part in, how to interview babysitters, and much more. Of course, child safety seats cost a little money, as do devices to make your home safe for youngsters. This workshop also costs a bit, but NCPC and Teen Center will be subsidizing much of that. Watch for flyers with more information around town, on-line, and at church.

Contents

1 New Worship Series	3 Youth Group
1 Compassion	3 Spring Break Mission
1 Holy Week at NCPC	3 Women & Men Groups
1 Dark AND Lovely	3 Spring Forward!
1 Mountain Housing	3 Coffee & Conversation
1 Opportunities	3 Birthdays
2 Mission & Food Pantry	4 Treasurer’s Report
2 Anniversaries	4 In Our Prayers
3 Bible Study	4 Rky Mtn Mission

We hope to bring adequate and attainable housing options for people who otherwise can't afford to live in Nederland. Maybe we can create landlord incentives to take part in government programs that assist low income folks. Perhaps we can partner with the town to offer deed restricted rental options for social servants, such as police or teachers.

We believe it is possible to help folks holistically, to take care of them through housing and with whatever financial management and counseling people might need to turn survival into thriving. And we have plans to work toward a new development, through a public/private/religious partnership that will help people gain the stability to contribute back to this community.

The not-so-secret beauty of Nederland is our amazing volunteers, and how capable they are in accomplishing just about anything.

If your heart moves for helping people and our town, especially if you have some experience in some industry that might touch on MHAP (finance, housing development, social work, etc), please talk to Hansen!

Together we can work toward changing some lives, one roof at a time.

"True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice that produces beggars needs restructuring."

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Compassion — Continued from page 1

replied. "You are always an example. Your only choice is what kind of an example you will be."

I knew that boy and I knew his parents; they both had high standards for their personal performance.

Yet I could empathize with his frustration. Haven't we all wanted to just kick back once in a while and not be on camera?

Perhaps Samuel Johnson had this in mind when he reflected that "most men have their bright and cloudy days: at least, they have days when they put their powers into act, and days when they suffer them to repose."

In this manner, being compassionate is similar to being a good example. We are

Continued next column

always reflecting compassion; our only choice in the matter is whether we reflect it brightly, dully, or not at all.

You see, compassion is piece of cake — it's a choice — that's simple — *it's just not easy.*

As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my care was employ'd in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another; habit took the advantage of inattention; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason.

— Benjamin Franklin
Autobiography

Benjamin Franklin became aware of this when he "conceiv'd the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection." As the inset above notes, he soon realized he had bitten off a good deal more than he had anticipated.

However, Franklin did not throw in the towel. He pursued his goal relentlessly. He decided that there are certain virtues that are "necessary and desirable" to acquire or become; his were thirteen: Temperance, Silence, Order, Resolution, Frugality, Industry, Sincerity, Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquility, Chastity, and Humility. Then he "annexed to each a short precept, which fully express'd the extent I gave to its meaning."

The precept following Humility was: "Imitate Jesus and Socrates."

Might we learn something from Mr. Franklin? He actually drafted what we might call a score card to record his performance. He focused on one virtue each week and reviewed each day at its end and noted with a minus or a plus whether his actions lived up to that virtue or not.

The fact that he set out in such a methodical and orderly manner is an inspiration in itself.

NEXT MONTH LET'S BEGIN to explore how we might begin to draw compassion into our lives, our communities and the world.

I'm thinking of a relatively small step; a virtue not mentioned by Franklin.

However, it's probably part of his Silence and Sincerity, perhaps a bit in his Justice and Moderation, most certainly in Humility, and it offers an opening to Tranquility—of mind and circumstance. Its name is Forbearance.

In the meantime, take a moment now and again to reflect on compassion, to think about virtue, to wonder about forbearance.

Fundraiser Rescheduled to May 2



"With a Little Help From Our Friends"
We can put an end to hunger in our community!

Please join us for our 2nd Annual Fundraiser
Saturday, May 2, 2015
Nederland Community Center

Featuring:
The Live Rockin' Music of Slopeside
A "Something For Everyone" Silent Auction
A "Just What I Wanted" Snack Bar
Hamburgers - Hot Dogs - Nachos - Chips - Soda -
Sweet Treats
Everything \$5 or Less

Silent Auction & Snack Bar Open At 6:30
Music From 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Admission By Your Generous Cash Donation
And
A Can/Box of Food or a Personal Hygiene Item



If everyone gives a little, everyone can eat

Mission Report

— Dennis Whalen

Due to the expected snow storm on February 21, the Food Pantry determined that it was best to reschedule the annual fund raiser to Saturday, May 2. There was simply too much risk of the food pantry losing money if people were unable or unwilling to attend the fund raiser due to the weather.

As a reminder, the Food Pantry fund raiser will include a snack bar, silent auction and a sock hop with a live band.

One More Step



The children that attended worship on Sunday, February 15 sang One More Step with Jan Tafoya. (Photo: Michael O'Neill)

March Anniversary!

27 Dan and Marylou Harrison

The background photo is just to support positive weather thinking.



clear: “I am dark AND lovely.” There is no negative conjunction in the text, no implication of shame or denial, and the story goes on to show the girl as very proud of her dark skin, and Solomon very, ahem, enamored by every inch of his bride.

Yet most translators (overwhelmingly white) assume some tension between darker skin and beauty—the old King James and Douay Rheims, the conservative favorites ESV and NIV, my go to NLT, the mainline traditional RSV, the paraphrased Message, even the intentionally liberal Voice... The only translations I can find that deal with this verse appropriately are the children’s versions CEB and CEV (probably because they simplify everything) and the NRSV (most certainly because it is translated by actual scholars).

What other assumptions about skin color sneak into the way you see the world? What other assumptions about sneak into your Bible? How much of your (and my) view and understanding of the world is based on little mistakes or presumptions or lies that people told us?

Yet most translators (overwhelmingly white) assume some tension between darker skin color and beauty—the old King James and Douay Rheims, the conservative favorites ESV and NIV, my go to NLT, the mainline traditional RSV, the paraphrased Message, even the intentionally liberal Voice... The only translations I can find that deal with this verse and issue appropriately are the children’s versions CEB and CEV (probably because they simplify everything) and the NRSV (most certainly because it is translated by actual scholars). What other assumptions about color sneak into the way you see the world? What other assumptions sneak into your Bible? How much of your (and my) view and understanding of the world is based on tiny little mistakes or presumptions or lies that people told us?

Bible Study

When the Bible Study finishes with the Gospel of Mark, we’ll take a little break for Holy Week (no meeting 1 Apr), and start anew on 8 April. This is definitely a great opportunity to get into the Bible for the first time, dive deeper into a book you love, share and be shaped by stories of faith, and see God’s presence in a new light.

Youth Group

The 2014-2015 Youth Group calendar of events is published on our website! Check it out at www.nederlandcpc.org/youth-group.

- 1 March 11:30 All Youth, with lunch
- 20-23 March Spring Break Mission Blitz!!!
- 12 April 11:30 All Youth, with lunch

CAN YOU COOK ONE DINNER for about 15 teenagers? The Youth Group from Westminster Presbyterian is joining the young folk from NCPC to spend a weekend of their Spring Break in service to our community. We’re looking for someone to provide a meal the night of Friday 20 March, so that all the kiddos can bond and start their time off strong! Talk to Hansen if you’re available.

Spring Break Mission Blitz

Our Youth Group has a long tradition of spending weekends doing outreach with the teenagers from Westminster Presbyterian (Pueblo). In the fall, we all head to Lake City, and in the spring now our friends come up to Nederland. This year we will be helping an elderly couple with their property, a disabled woman move, and maybe handling a few projects around the church. Say hi to the friendly new faces in worship on 22 March, and pray that they hear a little bit more about God’s call in their life, as they serve our community.

High Expectations

Join other Ned parents Wednesday 4 March at a workshop on Parenting and Pot. After the FREE dinner at 5:30, comedian and family advocate Ray Lozano will teach about drug education. Then a local panel of experts will share an open forum Q&A. [Opportunities for Parents - Page 1](#)

Women’s Group meets the first Sunday of each month at 4 pm. All women are welcome, whether you want to share a margarita or just some laughs with new church friends! This month, 1 March, let’s get together at Kathmandu at noon. For next month, the first Sunday is Easter, so let’s postpone to 12 April.

Men’s Group meets the third Sunday of each month at 4 pm. All men are welcome, whether you want to share a beer or help plan our next outreach project. This month, 15 March, let’s get away from the Frozen Dead Guy craziness, with time together at Salto.

SPRING MAY NOT BE HERE YET

but Daylight Savings Time begins next weekend as we “spring forward”* at 02:00 on March 8. (*Before the arrival of digital time, that meant you move the “big” hand forward one hour.)



And if you forget—no worries—you’ll arrive at church just in time for coffee and fellowship

THE NEVER ENDING FOOD DRIVE needs your help and support; it keeps going Food Drive



on because hunger keep rolling along in this nation. Bring a non-perishable food item to worship next time. Thanks for your support and your generous participation.

FELLOWSHIP AFTER WORSHIP starts with you. Photos of those who host fellowship will appear soon in the newsletter. They say a picture is worth a thousand words—watch for your photo in the future!

Contact Claudia at 303-258-3447 or see sign-up sheets on kitchen door to participate in Fellowship

Drop in for a Cuppa!



Coffee and Conversation

Every Thursday, 9 am, at *The Train Cars* back room, everyone is invited for coffee and conversation about life, faith, church and everything in between.

WHEN THE BOOK CLUB finishes Brian McLaren’s *A New Kind of Christianity*, we’ll take a little break (no meetings 24 & 31 March), and start anew on 7 April. All are welcome to join in for great discussion, 6:30 on Tuesdays in the sanctuary.

March Birthdays!

- 1 Larry James
- 2 Schubert Ogden
- 3 Charlie Collier
- 4 Marylou Harrison
- 5 Rhonda Skeie
- 17 Steve Filer
- 17 Craig Skeie
- 18 Jim Stevens
- 20 Mary Wingate
- 28 Judy Anderson



Treasurer's Report

Income \$4,691, Budgeted Income \$6,058

Expenses \$6,990, Budgeted Expenses \$8,212



Violet Aandres; Anastasia and family; Judy Anderson; Rev. Gibney's brother; the Hunt family; the Irwin family; Linda Jones; David Lynd; Karen Moss; Miles Pancoast and family; Rhonda Skeie and her brother Steve Holland; Atashnaa Werner; Gail and David Skinner; Megen Stadele; love and consideration within the church and denomination; for those who are unable to worship with us regularly; for those serving in the military; for all those caring for aging parents; and for those dealing with hearts in pain, literally and figuratively.

Rocky Mountain Mission

On 7 February NCPC received a generous grant to kick off the *Rocky Mountain Mission* program! We did a pilot for this program last summer, when Wes Stiefer recruited a church youth group from Guymon, OK to come for a week of service to our community. This summer, we hope to have three separate weeks of outreach, where young people can stay at the church to work on homes of people in need, serve the town by fixing and cleaning up parks and trails, lay up wood for elderly folks, help with the Food Pantry, and all sorts of other projects.

The funding comes from the DREAM program in the Presbyterian Church (USA), which encourages "Developmental, Risky, Experimental, and Adaptive Mission". Already we have one church from Minnesota signed up for a week in August, and others are calling to learn more. If you would be willing to cook a dinner, lend out a shower, or know of good projects for young people to accomplish, please tell Hansen!

Just a Friendly Reminder

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

(Matt. 25:35)

Dear Reader, welcome to Nederland Community Presbyterian Church, a guest-friendly church. At least we would like to think so.

Folks come to church for many different reasons: perhaps for the thought provoking preaching (*messages that may evoke personal inquiry, reflection and change after years of fixed thinking*); perhaps for the music program and the opportunity to sing in a choir; perhaps for the well planned and executed programs for their children and youth; perhaps for the opportunity to make friends and be part of a new community; or maybe just because their parents drummed it into their heads that they should attend church.

But after the initial visit, what is it that brings people back? I'm guessing that folks return to a church where they felt welcomed and comfortable because of the friendliness of the regular worshippers.

Probably all churches think they're friendly and welcoming; and they may very well be to friends and acquaintances they have known for years.

Following are a couple of examples of experiences at other churches.[†]

It was a nightmare I'll never forget.

Two days before Christmas. A free Sunday morning, free to visit a church for its special Christmas Sunday morning service. We chose one a little distance from home, a church where we were virtually unknown. We left early to be sure to be on time but missing the street, driving around a little we arrived at 11:01 a.m. The service had just begun!

Our first encounter was large beautifully carved solid wood doors. What was behind those doors? We entered unnoticed and stood alone in the foyer listening to the congregation singing the first carol. Finding the coat room, I hung up my winter coat and returned to my wife still standing alone in the foyer. Two ushers stood in the entrance to the sanctuary with their backs to us joyfully singing with the standing congregation. I startled one of them when I touched him on the shoulder and asked for a bulletin. He handed us two then turned to continue singing. We were left to find our seats in a full auditorium, Christmas Sunday morning, congregation standing.

I spotted two seats on the aisle half way to the front. Relieved, we hurried down the aisle only to discover signs on the seats; "Reserved for ushers."

At that moment the carol concluded and the congregation sat down. Everyone, except us! Embarrassed? You bet! What do we do now?

Over in the far corner, at the back, I saw some empty wooden chairs that had been brought in to handle the overflow. We worked our way toward them and sat down just in time for the next hymn. We searched – but no hymn books were to be found. After the hymn we were instructed to "meet and greet" our neighbors. No one talked to us – visitors – on such a strategic Sunday morning.

Were we relaxed, comfortable, ready to worship God and hear from Him? Not really!! Will we ever go back to that church? Not likely!! After the service we met the same apathy – no one welcomed us or even attempted to speak to us. What was the problem?

In many ways this is a great church, just not a visitor friendly church.

Compare that experience to the following experience:

Recently we visited a large church. As we stepped up to enter the front door, a lady greeted us by saying "Hi, Is this your first visit with us?" After we replied in a positive manner, she introduced herself, asked our name and walked us to a welcome center. At the center she introduced us by name to the person at the desk who immediately offered help and gave us directions to important areas of the church such as rest rooms and the auditorium. As we were about to end our conversation an usher walked up and she introduced us to him. He then led us to our seats in the auditorium. In just a few short minutes we had been introduced to several friendly people, our names mentioned three times, and were given all the initial information we needed. With such a well-planned strategy, there is no wonder that the church is growing.

Where do you think NCPC lands on that continuum?

Let's face it; not all of us are comfortable with initial introductions. In fact, for some of us the trepidation we feel inside knowing that we should make the first move gives another meaning to *Frozen Chosen*.

However, this is where your faith meets the road. After all, this is very fundamental Golden Rule in action. Given a similar circumstance, how would you like to be treated? What would make you feel more comfortable and welcome?

If you think you are too nervous, too shy or too scared, then just how do you think that other person is feeling? For many of us, *high anxiety* accurately defines our experience of first walking into an unfamiliar church.

We experience a multitude of concerns and questions; and we know what they are because we've all been there at one time or another.

It's NOT JUST THE GREETERS' JOB to make guests feel welcome; **it's everyone's job**. Think of it this way; when an unfamiliar person walks into the church, or you see them at fellowship following worship, remember that **they are a guest** of our church community and not just a visitor.

Try this: picture someone you would love to welcome into your home – someone you would roll out the welcome mat for without reservation – perhaps an old college or high school mate – now pretend that's who just walked into the church or fellowship hall. Go welcome them accordingly.

"... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

Matt. 25:40

[†]Experiences quoted are excerpts from: Building A Visitor Friendly Church (<https://bible.org/article/building-visitor-friendly-church>) ... (Ed.)

**We don't see things as they are;
we see them as we are.**

—Anas Nin