

# The Bell Tower

April 2015

NEDERLAND COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

CHARTER FOR COMPASSION PARTNER



## Presbytery Report

— Hansen

Last June the Presbyterian denomination to which NCPC is affiliated (the “PCUSA” is the largest Presbyterian denomination in the country) gathered for its bi-annual General Assembly. That is a week-long meeting, composed of an equal number of Pastors and lay leaders, each designated by their regional bodies to handle all sorts of business of the church. You probably heard about one of their decisions: the General Assembly approved a recommendation to amend wording in our constitution, that would allow pastors to officiate weddings between, “two people, traditionally a man and a woman”.

For that full amendment to become official, a majority of the 171 regional bodies would have to agree. Back in February our own regional group of Presbyterian churches (from the Nebraska panhandle and north-eastern Colorado) met to vote. After passionate and civil conversation, we voted 53-38 to approve. For comparison, Denver voted ‘yes’ 96-38, Wyoming voted ‘no’ 21-22, and South-eastern Colorado voted ‘yes’ 30-24. Western Colorado has yet to vote.

With an official count verified on Tuesday 17 March, we reached the majority of regional bodies that had voted ‘yes’, thus the amendment was passed and became official church polity. The PCUSA is now the largest religious body in the world to affirm same-sex marriage. For many, this is a blow to their faith; for others, it is the most hopeful sign of God’s love

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## New Worship Series

After Easter we have a hopeful new worship series, *How Does Your Garden Grow?*

This is a hopeful series, in one sense, because many of us are hoping to see our seeds sprout with the spring, rather than freeze with a lingering winter!

It is hopeful in a more metaphorical sense, insofar as we also want to grow spiritually, rather than sit in the dirt of complacency and boredom.

Here is what you can expect for these next weeks’ themes.

- Soil – How do we till our souls so that God’s Word can blossom?
- Radishes – What is the root of our faith?
- Grapes & Wheat – How do we connect deeply with God?
- Lilies – What is God’s plan and comfort for my life?
- Cucumbers – What do we do with lament and pain?

## Bible Study

Our next study, starting anew on **April 8**, is *Jonah*.

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.

## Child Safety Workshop

There are a million things parents can worry about. On the really, really big dangers, wouldn’t it help if someone could help you navigate 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.”

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## Don’t Forget Holy Week

*(Bless the rain/snow on Thursday and Friday, and come to church anyway you can.)*

**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 and Potluck Breakfast!

**5 April, 10:00 and 11:15 a.m.** – In order to accommodate all our neighbors who want to celebrate hope that always rises, 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.)



**April 2nd 7:00 pm – Fellowship Hall**

Remembering the last supper symbolically

## Easter Potluck – 8:30 am

Gathering for food and celebration in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a dish to share – pancakes will be provided.



*“People everywhere are in trouble. And the only way we can reach them is through our religion, through our compassion, through bringing justice.”*

– DR. SAKENA YACOBI



they have ever seen in organized religion. Some members of NCPC bemoan this decision; others celebrated.

Since our own regional vote, Hansen met with a group of local Presbyterian pastors who voted against, to listen to their concerns about how this affects their ministry. As much as this issue has centered on theological disagreements, the fact is, it is also very, very personal for many people. Of course, Hansen is also very willing to chat with any of you, who have questions or comments, whether they be procedural, theological, or personal.

We've also seen First Presbyterian in Boulder take further steps to leave our denomination, and affiliate with the Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians, a new denomination, composed of mostly larger urban churches that resist the recent changes

in the PCUSA. Over the last decade or so, as divisions about homosexuality have raged in every denomination, a few hundred PCUSA congregations have already left, and many thousand individual members. Some are fearful of this decline, and what it will do to the stability of our denomination.

However, over 10,000 congregations and 1.8 million members remain. And nearly 300 new church developments have sprouted up in the last few years. NCPC itself is growing energetically. So, for anyone who thinks the Church is dying, let us remember that Christ died also... This Easter, we celebrate a God who is risen and who raises us to new life. Wherever you land on this controversy, may you trust that God works to redeem all things, and draw the world toward a Kingdom "as it is in Heaven". May that be our affirmation, in the face of all things good or bad.

### Lemonade Stand Success - for Stop Hunger Now

Over Frozen Dead Guy Days, a bunch of teenagers, with some sunburned adult help, set up a lemonade and coffee stand at the church.

While we were (thankfully) a good distance away from the craziest fun of the weekend, plenty of people wandered by from the further parking lots. Our stand raised \$233.31, all for the Stop Hunger Now project, which amounts to nearly 700 meals for hungry children!

And with the money we raised that weekend, and the Christmas ornaments we sold, we are about halfway to our goal, for packing 10,000 meals to send to schools and orphanages abroad!

**YOU CAN HELP US** prepare the rice/soy/veggie meals on **5 August**, at the Teen Center. And you can also help us reach our fundraising goal—with shipping, it costs us about 35 cents per meal, so a few bucks can make quite a difference!




When you come to the church on **Saturday 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.

**THE NEVER ENDING FOOD DRIVE** needs your continuing help and support. The drive is never ending because hunger is still present in our community. Consider bringing a non-perishable food item to worship next time. Thanks for your support!



### Mission Report

— Dennis Whalen

In February, a shorter month that was not as busy as some, the Nederland Food Pantry provided food assistance to 219 households, and received 1241 lbs in food donations. As we move into the Summer season the Food Pantry will be serving more people and in need of even more food. The Food Pantry has successfully been granted some money from a Emergency Food and Shelter grant to help in obtaining more food. Applications are being submitted for other applicable grants.

The Food Pantry, having joined with the Clothing Closet, is also providing increased support for the Clothing Closet.

**CURRENTLY WE'RE SEEKING** someone to more closely assist Kristi Venditti with the management of the Clothing Closet. Kristi has taken on some added work commitments and needs help, an assistant, to best maintain the Clothing Closet. If you're interested or just want more information please contact me.

**PLEASE REMEMBER the Food Pantry annual fund raiser** that will be on **May 2**, and check out our web site at [NederlandFoodPantry.org](http://NederlandFoodPantry.org).



### Spring Break Mission Blitz

Ten teenagers from NCPC and Westminster Presbyterian (Pueblo) took part in our Spring Break Mission Blitz!

Alongside some fearless and awesome adult helpers, our group helped at a Saws and Slaws event, to clear brush for an elderly couple, on a really steep slope! We prepared many planting beds and started potatoes for the Food Pantry. We split firewood for the church's Wood Bank, to provide fuel for area families in need.

The teens enjoyed karaoke with Jim Reis, fun at the Gilpin Rec Center, climbing at Hansen's house, and good food from Cinda Kochen and the Ned Area Seniors. If you caught them at worship on 22 March, you know they were a great group of kids!

### Treasurer's Report

For 2015 through 02/28/15:

**Budgeted Income \$12,113**

**Actual Income \$8,299**

**Budgeted Expenses \$16,424**

**Actual Expenses \$14,308**

### 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.



### April Birthdays!

2	Megen Stadele	12	Doug Trostle
3	Jim Sizer	18	Lee Stadele
7	Bill Stiefer	25	Larson Burak
11	Diana Nelson	27	Susan Lutz

Missing *your* birthday? Tell Gary.

### New Church Directory

It's time we get a new church directory. **We need a team of volunteers** to take pictures, collect and proof information, and publish a document, so it's easier for all of us to be a community together.

If you can help, please contact Hansen!

**Blowing out another's candle  
won't make yours shine brighter.**

### Do you have questions or comments about NCPC?

In the Presbyterian denomination, the ministry of administration for each congregation is handled by its Session of Elders (like a spiritual Board of Trustees), and the ministry of compassion is directed by the Deacons.

### Here are your church leaders and staff:

Clerk of Session, Nancy Lynd  
 Elder for Finance, Marylou Harrison  
 Elder for Worship, Emily Haynes  
 Elder for Fellowship, Claudia O'Neill

### Youth Group

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

**29 March 11:30** – All youth, with lunch  
**16 April 7:00** – All Youth, with dessert  
**3 May 11:30** – All Youth, with lunch

**Women's Group** meets the first Sunday of each month at noon. All women are welcome, whether you want to share a margarita or just some laughs with new church friends! This month, 12 April, let's get together at Black Forest.

**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, 19 April, let's get together at Very Nice.

### Book Club

Our next book, starting anew on 7 April, is Brian McLaren's *We Make the Road By Walking*. We read one of his books previously; now this is McLaren's latest work—a year-long spiritual formation. All are welcome to join in for great discussion, 6:30 on Tuesdays in the sanctuary.

**In our Prayers** — Violet Aandres; Judy Anderson; Elizabeth Azcarate; Delores Cieloha; Rich Deubel and his sister; Sue Evans; Kayla; Rev. Gibney's brother; Linda Jones; Frank Lutz; David Lynd; Chuck Miller; Anastasia and family; Karen Moss; Miles Pancoast and family; Rhonda Skeie and her brother, Steve Holland; Gail and David Skinner; Megen Stadele; Atashnaa Werner; Dorothy Whalen; love and consideration within the church and denomination; for those who are unable to worship with us regularly; for those serving in the military; Central Presbyterian Church (Longmont); and the Ruston Police Department.

Elder for Property, Jim Reis  
 Elder for Mission, Dennis Whalen  
 Deacon, David Ford  
 Deacon, Katie Haynes  
 Deacon, Kathleen Henningsen  
 Deacon, Bette Ventrella  
 Treasurer, Wes Stiefer  
 Piano, Daniel Herman  
 Childcare, Pam North  
 Sexton, John Callahan  
 Pastor, Rev Hansen Wendlandt

## Compassion in Action? What's that?

— Gary



I don't know about you, but I'm still sorting out what compassion is and how it shows up as compassionate behavior. I got a hit last Wednesday as I shopped at Natural Grocers in Evergreen. When I was checking out, Hanna, the cashier, noticed that the handle on my shopping bag still had the plastic loop on it (think of thin fishing line) that had attached the label before purchasing it. She told me she had ripped up her finger on one of those recently and didn't want it to happen to me. She took scissors and clipped it off.

**PERHAPS BECAUSE I WONDER** a lot about compassion and just what it is and how it manifests, it occurred for me that this was a simple act of compassion in action. I thanked Hanna for her act of compassion in action. She looked thoughtful for a moment and then said, "Yes, I like that, *compassion in action*."

**COMPASSION IN ACTION** can be as simple as Hanna's act kindness, or it can be as incredible as **Not Impossible, LLC's Project Daniel**.

The founder, Mick Ebeling, tracked down Sudanese teenager Daniel Omar who lost both his arms when a bomb went off while he was tending cattle. Mick set up what is probably the world's first 3D-printing prosthetic lab and training facility. This act of compassion in action gave hope and independence back to a young man who, at age 14, had both his arms blown off and considered his life not worth living.

Two 3D printers have since been left in the local hospital so more people can receive artificial limbs - for a cost price of about \$100. Check out the video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDYFMgrjeLg>. It's well worth 3+ minutes of your time.



Daniel feeding himself for the first time in 2 years



**Join the movement. Sign the Charter. Take some action**

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Many years ago I was exposed to a code of conduct presented as a set of principles necessary for appropriate conduct with other people. The principles, twelve in number, were presented as fundamental *virtues* because all others, regardless of their names, will be found to be variations or combinations of the basic twelve.

When mastered, the twelve coalesce into a thirteenth — Love. Interesting numbers, aren't they?

One of the twelve is Forbearance. This was presented as a response to a personal affront, provocation or injury — real or imagined — and replaces an instinctive feeling or need for retaliation and desire for revenge. I think you will find that Christ had things to say about nonresistance and turning the other cheek. One example is *Matthew 5:39*.

For many of us, implementing Christ's command is an arduous undertaking.

Perhaps there is another, less daunting, access point to at least begin the practice and ultimate mastery of forbearance.

"If you can't think of anything good to say don't say anything at all," was often heard at our dinner table when I was a kid. I was a young adult before I fully appreciated the wisdom in that.

Thoughts, words and actions have a way of coming home to roost; whether constructive or destructive they always returned in kind.

Could a less daunting initial step towards Christ's command be to forbear, or refrain, from starting or adding to gossip? If you think of how it feels to be the recipient of such thinking and speaking, then would not starting or adding to it perhaps be compassion in action?



What do you think? Put it in the May newsletter? Or post it on the bulletin board.

Or take some action: start a discussion group about compassion.

I remember reading in one of Edwene Gaines' books — she's an ordained minister in the Unity Church — that she had noticed early in her career a lot of unsavory material coming from her head and mouth. She resolved to go on a 21 day fast from gossip, complaining and whining.

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***Change takes place through action, not through meditation and prayer alone.***

—The Dalai Lama

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She had read that it would take 21 days to supplant an existing habit with a new one.

When she launched her fast she found her old behavior had been so habitual, unconscious and insidious she couldn't think of anything to say for three weeks!

William James told a story of a person walking along a river who called out to two fish, "How's the water?" A half hour later one fish said to the other, "What's water?" That's our habitual way of being; we're unconscious of it.

In *Magical Mind – Magical Body*, Deepak Chopra said the average person has 60,000 thoughts a day. The challenge is that 95% or more are the same thoughts we had yesterday; that's habitual thinking.

Now I'm wondering if one of Christ's sermons for his disciples might have gone like this: "Guys you've got to take the good news out to the world. Folks need to know that my way is the way out, it's not an easy path to follow, and habits must be changed.

*They've got to get with the program now if all the suffering and nonsense in the world is going to be put to rest. Tell them to cut out all the gossiping, complaining and whining; like pebbles in their sandals, these just make the journey a lot more painful and insufferable.*

*Tell them to be my sheep and bunch up into communities and learn to speak well of one another; give an encouraging word and a pat on the back to one another. That won't make the way any smoother, because there's a lot they must learn and experience along the way. But it will make the journey a lot more fun and fulfilling. Now, follow me!*

Would that be compassion in action?

*"We need leadership that can help save the planet, but that leadership is not only political, it should be spiritual*

— THE VENERABLE THICH NHAT HANH

