

# The Bell Tower

NEDERLAND COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

JANUARY 2016

ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING — JANUARY 10

SUNDAY SCHOOL — JANUARY 10

BOOK CLUB STARTING UP — PAGE 3

It's been darned chilly in our neck of the woods!  
Wherever you are, we hope you can weather winter's  
storms and arrive unscathed at the season's end.

Treasurer's Report
For 2015 through 11/30/15:
Income \$75,250
Budgeted Income \$72,700
Expenses \$94,759
Budgeted Expenses \$90,332

## De-Decorating the Sanctuary

Please stick around after worship on Sunday, 3 January — your help is needed to take down and put away all the Christmas decorations.

**Sunday School** starts back up! On 10 January youngsters are again invited to take part in their own special weekly activities! We'll go 9-9:45 in the Education room (NW corner), for kids pre-K through 6th grade. Thanks to Aimee Tomlinson for spurring us on, and to all the other volunteers

who will be a great influence for our children. Childcare during worship will remain with Ms. Pam.

(If you are a parent, and don't know what to do while your kiddo is learning about their story with God, might we suggest Choir, or help with fellowship, or go have a coffee and conversation with some other parents.)

**New Directory** — Many folks in our church family been photographed for the new directory! We are now in the process of proofing the contact information you want printed. Watch out for a call or e-mail from church, and the sooner you let us know that everything is correct and how you want it, the sooner we'll be able to publish, and the better it will be for us to build relationships and community!

## Annual Meeting of the Congregation

On Sunday, January 10 we gather after worship to vote on new Elders and Deacons, vote on the Pastor's compensation package, and learn about the 2016 budget. Please plan to join, to help with the administration of our ministry.

### Compassion: a process of becoming

In *Wish for a Better World*, the preface to her book *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*, Karen Armstrong notes the title brings to mind the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous — a program for those of us addicted to alcohol — inferring that most of us experience another addiction — egotism. **Our ego is our sense of self.** This coupling creates an addiction that is very difficult to move beyond.

In the first chapter, *Learn About Compassion*, Armstrong reviews several of the world's religious traditions. Each one in its own way affirms the *practice* of a compassionate life as the path to strength, peace and security, rather than a sign of weakness.

Confucius, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, created rituals and "spiritual education that enabled people to transcend the limitations of selfishness."

[Continued page 3 - Twelve Steps....]

## Building on Our Strengths

—Hansen

I'm writing this little article about the New Year while the Choir is practicing for Christmas Eve. It sounds like a lot of fun in there. Daniel just transitioned from the lullaby *Still, Still, Still*, to the ominous *Star Wars* theme, whereat Tamara yelled at him. Mark is laughing at Luke telling his mom Marylou that she can sing louder because he's here to support her. You can tell that Will's presence makes the Choir more confident. And having some new singers, like Kathy and Cinda, adds nicely to the feel and volume, even if they say what most of you say when we ask you to join: "Are you sure you want me to sing?" Yes, yes we do.

Barbara was in charge of corralling the kiddos when I arrived; other volunteers, I'm sure, have stepped up over the years. But we've been without a children's Sunday morning program for over a year now. Mostly, that's because a ton of our youngsters moved away, or their parents' situation changed so they don't come as often with grandpa or grandma, or their family chose to take part in another church with more children's activities. Well, over the last couple months, we've seen a resurgence of children, sometimes a dozen or more in worship! It looks alive and wild. We've even had a couple infant baptisms, with a few more in the works. Thanks, parents—keep 'em coming!

Have you noticed that there are fewer summer folks, coming for shorter time? The numbers show that we just aren't seeing as many old friends June-August, and the anecdotes say it's because people are aging and summers are busier. And yet, we gained four new members this fall, and see new folks summering (Hills) and retiring (Yansuras) to Ned. Visitors continue to pop in about every Sunday. And I can't count how many people have said to me or one of you, something like, "If I ever went to a church, I'd go to that one."

If someone looked at our budget, they might frown at the amount of money that we give directly to missions. The raw numbers for 2016 will show something like \$850, for the Food Pantry and Highlands Camp, out of a \$100,000 budget. Yikes... Not very efficient or generous, right? Well, if you dig a bit deeper, you see we give another \$500 for Presbytery mission; more than \$3500 went through to Stop Hunger Now for international hunger aid; over two years we'll spend \$10,000 on local mission projects through our Rocky Mountain Mission program; the Deacons give out about \$3000 a year to local folks in need; and we spend hundreds of hours of volunteer time at the

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Food Pantry and the Summer Socks and Sandwiches ministry to the homeless campers, not to mention the day-to-day outreach that the building supports for Boy Scouts or for people in trouble to stop by to talk or get a blanket. So, that's really more like \$13,000 a year in mission, along with a strong community presence, which is pretty darn good for our little community!

For years America has seen the rise of the "Nones", people who are disassociated from Religion, many of whom (but not all) don't believe in any sort of God. More recently, religious sociologists have pointed to a group of "Dones", people who identify comfortably with Christianity or faith, but are, without any doubt, done with church. A pastor friend of mine who runs a popular blog recently coined the term "Ones", to describe church people who take part in one and only one aspect of their congregation's ministry, such as just worship or just youth group or just helping with a mission program. I'm not sure which of those three groups is the most dangerous for the future of the Church universal. But I do know that, with a quick scan of our year-round members and friends, about 60% of our most active folks have participated in Choir, book club, Bible Study, Youth Group, mission work, congregational leadership, men's or women's group, or some other program at the church. My pastor/blogger friend set a three-year goal to get half of his big Portland church out of the Ones, so we must be doing at least ok.

We have a lot to work on, but I think we have some real **strengths to build on**.

For instance, after nearly a decade with a pastor who was excellent at music, and now with a pastor who has, ahem, other gifts, Emily has done a huge job to hold us together. Hers is about the biggest volunteer job someone could take on at a church, and maybe it's been unfair to expect her up there every Sunday with the guitar, picking music, guiding the singers and the are-you-sure-you-want-me-to-sing-ers. Yet, she's been a trooper, one of the most loyal folks you could ask for, here every week even if she doesn't have a clue whether there will be enough of a Choir to sing; and with that, she's put together some really powerful pieces. So,

as she rolls off of her three year term on Session, we are going to **build on that strength**, to pursue hiring someone to become the Director of Music Ministries. Thanks, Emily and Daniel and our Choir regulars for bringing us to this point, so that music can continue to be a prayer to draw people closer to God!

And, now that we have a pile of children running around, we are going to **build on that strength** with the return of Sunday School. Aimee (not Amy or the other Amy) has gathered a team of teachers, although I'm sure she could use more people willing to give an hour before worship.

**"If I ever went to a church, I'd go to that one."**

**... more like \$13,000 a year in mission**

**... a strong community presence**

**... pretty darn good for our little community!**

We've always been a welcoming, open church. And we are going to continue to **build on that strength** by being visible in the community, not only in outreach, but in spreading a message of peaceful, loving, humble faith. All of us live it out in flawed ways, but I like to think that makes us real, not hypocritical. So, if we keep this place feeling like a home, more visitors will become familiar faces, and as our diversity grows, we'll all get a little closer to the holy mess God calls us to.

**We have a lot to work on . . .  
some real strengths to build on.**

As we continue to make the current mission programs more effective, we can **build on that strength** by adding new ways to serve our town and world. The new Nancy (newer than the less-new Nancy) is starting a program to tutor kids at the Elementary School. And there is talk of helping out families that can't afford to do their laundry, by renting out the shop for a few hours of community engagement and outreach.

A small church can't be everything for every different person, but we can live our lives closer together, more connected and involved with each other. So, I hope to **build on that strength** by re-energizing a Bible Study, including more people in mission projects, bringing new folks into

leadership positions, and having more opportunities for fellowship away from the building and in coffee shops and living rooms.

There is plenty still to do, for instance to build the Youth Group up and organize the ministry of administration. To the first, we're halfway through a bold attempt to teach teens about other religions, and in so doing draw new young people to church. Some folks find it controversial; others think it's absolutely the right thing to do. To the latter, we've secured background checks and official by-laws, and the less-new Nancy will be working with the Session on a formal Manual of Operations. Also, we've decided to hire our Treasurer, Wes, to keep us in tight financial shape. Some folks will find that controversial too; others think it's absolutely the right thing to do, for such a sensitive and important position.

There are some miracles still to come, but I believe we enter 2016 blessed by God. It's not going to be easy to accomplish everything, but without a doubt, something is moving here, something spiritual and something holy, that pushes past walls and into hearts, past troubles and into opportunities. I'm proud to walk this journey with ya'll, and I hope you can take part in it more deeply this year, so that **you can be the strength we build on too**.

#### **In our Prayers**

Please keep the folks and circumstances noted below in your daily thoughts and prayers.

Brook Blinberry;  
Violet Aandres and  
Rich Deubel; Judy  
Anderson; Cinda's  
brother, Bob; Delores



Cieloha; Rev Gibney's brother; Katie Haynes; Mike Haynes; Janet Irwin; Linda Jones; Holly, Mikey and Miles Kreps; Kaitlyn Lammers; Chuck Miller; Anastasia and family; Karen Moss; Diana Nelson; Morggan O'Neill; Miles Pancoast and family; Torin Perret; Jim Reis; J R Reynolds; Rhonda Skeie; Gail and David Skinner; Mike Smith; Keri Stiller; Vince Suich; Pat Whalen; Love and consideration within the church and denomination; for those serving in the military.

## Corner for Youth

A place for news, reports and updates on our church youth AND a place for our youth to let folks know what's happening, what's needed, your concerns. Let your VOICE be heard!!

**Youth Group** – We live in a diverse world, and young people could use help understanding some of those differences, especially with regard to faith. At the very least, some inter-religious dialogue can help them become better citizens; and more so, it can help them reflect on what the world means and how they want to engage it spiritually.

NCPC started in October sponsoring a program for teens and pre-teens to



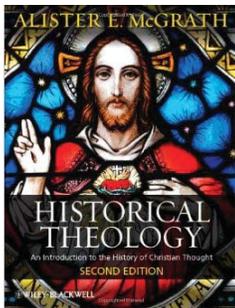
learn about various religious traditions. One Sunday a month all young people in town are invited to interact

with local folks who associate with other religions. (We could invite some Boulder faith leaders, but the priority is for our young folks to see and better understand their neighbors.) We have food and games and stories to make it engaging and educational.

Also, one Wednesday a month, our own Youth Group—with any visitors welcome—are invited to come figure out what makes their Christian heritage unique and meaningful.

The next gatherings are 13 Jan 6:30 (What's a Prayer?) and 24 Jan 11:45 (Buddhism).

**Book Club** for adults gets going again in the new year, each Tuesday at 6:30 in the sanctuary. We start with Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology* (2nd edition). It might be



a little unfair to call this one a 'book club'—really more of a 'class', because this will be a walk through the history of Christian theology, touching on the controversies, complications, mysteries, and great ideas, from the first people trying to figure out Jesus, to very contemporary scholars who seem to think they have.

## Mission

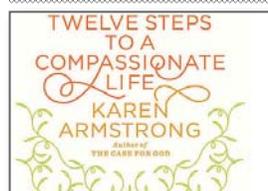
### FOOD PANTRY – Dennis Whalen

The Nederland Food Pantry's distribution of the Holiday Food Boxes and toys was a major success, with more boxes being distributed in 2015 than previous years. In addition Canyon Cares, a sister organization whom the Food Pantry works closely with, distributed an additional 14 food baskets to Nederland families. Some work is already underway in planning for the 2016 distribution.



This coming Spring and Summer the Food Pantry will be able to get help with the pantry's gardens from Work Force Boulder County where a part time person funded by Work Force Boulder County will be able to assist with the gardens. This will allow the Food Pantry to expand the gardens, thus providing more fresh, home grown vegetables for those in need.

The Board of Directors of the Nederland Food Pantry is in the process of adopting a policy that does not allow for monetary donations to be limited for specific uses.



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In India, Gotama noticed that harsh practices, the five prohibitions – produced transient experiences of ecstasy. He found it better to cultivate the emotions of compassion, joy and gratitude.

As with AA, the disciplines outlined in Armstrong's book must become a part of one's life—in a sense we become or embody compassion. And isn't this, after all, what Christ sought to teach? Following him, as an authentic disciple, is a manner of living and becoming rather than a system of dogma and beliefs.

The ego, Armstrong points out, would rather be right than compassionate. The ego is the hallmark of the "old brain," (the one we're using now) governed by powerful forces—the "four Fs"—feeding, fighting, fleeing and, uh, reproduction.

Thus, we are called to evolve *new brains* consciously—brains that operate at a higher frequency—brains that have

If people wish to limit their donations it'll simply be requested that the person purchase the items for which they wish to limit their donations, and then donate the items to the Food Pantry. This policy is being adopted because the Food Pantry

exists almost entirely thanks to volunteers, and our volunteers simply don't have the time to go shopping for a specific, limited set of items.

The Clothing Closet continues to have non clothing items, or clothing items that are simply worn out. This results in extra work for the volunteers and sometimes added costs for the Clothing Closet because they have to pay to have the 'trash' disposed. Please be aware that the Clothing Closet is only able to take and recycle gently used clothing.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who has been able to make a donation to the Nederland Food Pantry in 2015. The Food Pantry is able to continue its work within our community thanks to your kind and generous offerings.

become compassion, joy and gratitude. Contemporary neuroscience demonstrates the plasticity of the brain which the operator can change through focused repetition. Talking about compassion, hoping for it and wishful thinking are of dubious merit. Just as experience trumps belief, courage to practice and become trumps talk and hope.

The challenge is one of change and change is invariably daunting when it's *personal* and not the other guy's job. This brings up the questions: If not now, when? If not us, who? Isn't it about time—time to change? Look around at the world and where our present level of thinking has taken us.

Einstein is quoted as saying something like this: *the world we have created at our present level of thinking creates problems we cannot solve at the same level of thinking.*

This implies upping the amplitude—the vibration or frequency of our thoughts and emotions. We might conclude then that rather than a tune up, our brains need to *attune up!* Let the good times roll.

– Gary Ennor

**Men's Group** meets the third Sunday of each month at 4 pm. This month, we're hitting up Black Sheep Brewing (Jim Steven's garage, 13 Navajo).

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



**January Birthdays**

7	Adriana Heller	15	Dorothy Whalen
11	Aimee Tomlinson	18	Barbara Hardt

**January Anniversaries**

11	Claudia and Michael O'Neill
29	Doug and Joyce Trostle

**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, vacant (Opportunity!)  
 Elder for Fellowship, vacant (Calling you?)

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



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