

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*

March, 2014

Sorry, no photo this month of Nederland or
Barker Reservoir – photographer was AWOL.

Extreme Spirituality

— Rev. Hansen Wendlandt

About five years ago, I was asked to write a magazine article about extreme sports and spirituality. A lot has changed in those five years, especially how my back has healed, so that I don't deal with such pain. Other things have remained quite the same, namely that this month some of you have seen me on crutches, minus one tooth... Here's a slightly renewed version of that original piece.

“My snow cave melted down two months ago. The avalanche gear sits in the closet, still smiling from that last 30-inch powder day. From the trailhead I can see a few late-season backcountry skiers, speeding away from a June snowstorm. Driving up the canyon this morning, I passed so many other Saturday warriors: the dirt-faced smiles of casual mountain bikers, an oversized crash pad lying beneath a popular overhung boulder, empty whitewater kayak racks atop green Subaru's. Somewhere down the canyon in Boulder are training the world's fastest road bike racers, marathoners and 100-mile runners, adventure racers and Everest climbers. Where I live, 'extreme' is not a yes/no question, but a matter of “how big did you go?”

I have been a serious rower, crazy skier, and wild climber. I've had encounters with bears in four states. I once lived out of a canoe for a whole summer. The intensity and danger of those experiences have significantly shaped how I understand God (as far larger than anything we can comprehend, and deviously graceful), how I read the Bible (especially passages about thirst or wilderness) and how and why I pray (like a training regiment, or with sheer awe). And yet my perspective on 'extreme spirituality', at least these days, has more to do with being broken: suspicious, yet penitent.

I am too aware of my blessings to spend much energy lamenting generally about my frangibility. After all, I am still quite able by the world's standards. Rather, my issue is the fight between soul and

body each creaky morning, the helpless negativity after shortened exercise, days of despair after any serious activity forces me into bed-rest. I know well enough that there is nothing incompatible between God and ice packs, but when paying the price for adventure, it's hard to re-orient a faithful attitude.

Only 31 years old, my weakened body questions the value of such recklessness. After a broken back from rowing, cracked shin from skiing into a tree, weak ankles from marathons and tripping over rocks, stiff aching in my fingers from far too much cold weather bravery, and a torn rotator cuff from diving after Frisbees—after all that, I feel like Humpty Dumpty. No one knows if he ever found peace from his pieces, but with his wall-climbing days done, did the poor egg regret having sat there in the first place? Are we to simply accept that injuries and pain fit into God's plan, and keep going? Am I to believe that my resultant spiritual doldrums could ever serve a greater purpose?

A guess: *Shape*. Certainly some important part of my concept of God, or my response to grace would be different without these experiences. Crash a dozen times, but just once feel the maniacal peace of hucking off a snow-covered cliff, and one's willingness to trust God tends to expand. Expose yourself to a lightning storm above tree line or the visceral humility of stream bacteria, and petitions to God develop a certain purity, even when laced with vitriolic language. Would I pray with as much passion today, had I not stared down death and I-wish-I-was-dead feelings? Had I not fallen so dramatically from rock faces, wholly in reliance to a rope and belayer, would I realize just how paradoxically insignificant I am, yet still with some miraculous purpose I must need to fulfill?

Another guess: *Timing*. I was not a great rower, neither as fit nor graceful as many teammates. But I worked hard, and committed to training for a slim chance



of representing the United States. During a routine training session on calm cloudy blue waters, piercing focus turned to piercing agony, when I broke part of my fourth lumbar vertebrae. Rest didn't help much. Surgery neither. So, I retired, early, I thought. However, what if I had stayed healthy and trained longer? Regardless of whether my plans succeeded, I seriously doubt I ever would have continued on the path to ministry. Or, what if I had been hurt earlier? I probably never would have entered seminary. We have all had such *kairos* moments, where God shoves us at just the right time. Sometimes, I suppose, God shoves harder.

So, providence is tough love. And tough love can be enlightening. But here is my fear of such enlightenment: How many more spiritual lessons will God teach me this way? This summer, I'm in the market for some cheap grace!”



FOCUS ON MISSION – We have held great meetings about Christian Education and Worship. Now we turn our attention and appetites toward a *Focus on Mission Dinner*, rescheduled for March 19th, 6:30, at Dennis' house (57 Aspen Way).

How can our church answer its call to serve the least of these? How can we give more support to the Food Pantry? What needs does the town have that we might be called to participate: with seniors, community groups, kids in need, or whomever? What sorts of global justice could inspire the church? How might we want to host short-term mission trips?

If you have thoughts about these sorts of things, watch the bulletin, Facebook or website for more info; or talk to Hansen!

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Psst!

Hey, rumor has it you are sitting on a story, or have a need that others need to know. Send it in by March 27! This is your Newsletter!

Youth Group – Back in the fall, and for many falls before, the NCPC Youth Group has traveled with the Westminster Pres youth from Pueblo, for a mini-mission trip. Now, for the first time, they are coming here! For that first weekend of Spring Break (March 21-24), 6th-12th graders are invited to get away from home and bond with our friends, while serving our neighbors. Projects are not established yet, but expect to get sweaty and dirty; and expect to have fun with karaoke and skiing too! Watch for all the details to come out soon!

Other Upcoming Youth Group meetings!

Mar 9th, noon – Mission Project at the Clothing Closet

In April we will return to the schedule of meeting on the 2nd Sunday, 3rd Friday, and last Tuesday of each month.

Coffee and Visioning — In an effort to open up to a few more folks, we are moving to Thursday, 9 am, back at *The Train Cars* coffee shop's back room. Anyone is welcome to gather for coffee and to discuss who we are as a church, what we are called to do next, and how to move toward it.



MEN'S GATHERING – Thanks to the 8 guys who came out for the first NCPC Men's Gathering! It was fine beer and good conversation. We even had an impromptu Bible Study (randomly selected, it was the verse right before Jonah gets, ahem, purged from his fish), and many folks seemed excited about getting together to work with our hands for a mission project.

The will of the group was to aim toward something like a monthly gathering, up in Ned. So . . . Sunday, 16 March, gentlemen, meet at the church at 5 pm to walk en masse to Wild Mountain Smokehouse.



As will always be the case, any and all men are invited to join: active church members or guys who only come on Christmas, young and old, teetotalers or beer snobs like me, and friends are welcome..

Finally, it does sound like the women are also gathering soon, so you can appease the lady in your life by the fact that equal opportunity abounds at the church.



WOMEN'S GATHERING – Sunday, March 2, 2014 at 4 pm the ladies of NCPC will be meeting at Sundance Cafe for an invigorating discussion or just to have a Margarita. That's right, folks, the first monthly "Margarita's for Mamacita's" begins this month. Any and all women, feel free to join us! For info call 303.810.5409

Pastor Relations Committee

— Michael O'Neill

To support the transition time that we're in as a church family, we've been asked as a group to serve in a role that makes communication easy and accessible between Hansen, in his role as pastor, and our church family.

In our early meetings we spent time developing a more clear sense of what we as a church family were hoping for in asking Hansen to serve as our pastor. Two of the three of us had served on the Pastor Nominating Committee and had some confidence from our experience there that we could help.

We were equally interested in what Hansen felt he had to offer, as the Spirit guided him to accept our invitation to serve. We'll only get where we want to go with teamwork.

Based on lengthy conversations we developed more or less specific goals for Hansen within the following areas of the pastorate in our church.

- Pastoral Care
- Worship
- Christian Education
- Youth
- Mission
- Community Involvement
- Administration
- Leadership
- Professional Development
- Spiritual Growth

That's a long list and a big variety of challenges. We agreed that we needed to be cautious about being too specific or time-dependent about our goals, to leave room for the Spirit to move. And with this many responsibilities it's easy to see that Hansen's job is truly to "equip the people to do the ministry," as Paul advised in his Letters.

We're an advisory group to Hansen and to the Session, not even remotely supervisory. We hope you'll give us feedback and direction on how you think things are going for us with our pastor. How are we doing as a congregation? How is Hansen doing as a Pastor? Any concerns you'd like us to be aware of? Anything your especially happy about?

Please feel free to contact any of us at any time to let us know how you feel like things are going. Your comments can be as confidential as you wish.

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We'll be meeting with Hansen sometime In March for another one of our periodic conversations.

Facilities Management

— Jim Hubbard, Facilities Elder

After determining the leak over the light fixture in the rear of the church was in the area of the bell tower, Jim Ries and Dave Ford took a bucket of roofing cement up and smeared a sealant over everything that looked like it might be the place where water could enter. They have assured me it will not leak now unless it rains or we have snow melting in the bell tower. Maybe not even then. I held the ladder for them.

Even though with all the snow, spring is just around the corner and it will be time once again to give our buildings and grounds the annual spring renovation. An



exact date has not been set yet but plan on a Saturday morning early June. This is a fun time when we can all get together and by using our collective talents, clean up and fix up our Little Brown Church with a Bell.



Violet Aandres;
Judy Anderson;
Lynda Dawson;
the Filer family;
Rev. Mark Lake;
Judy MacDougall; Karen

Moss; Rhonda Skeie and her brother Rev Steve Holland; Kent Snow; Megan Stadel and her parents; Joye Stanich; Orran's Family; Dennis Whalen's family; for those who are unable to worship with us on a regular basis; for those serving in the military.

SERMONS ONLINE – You can always find sermons linked on the church Facebook group, or *now on our website*, under Worship. (www.nederlandcpc.org)

Keep feeling the need for being first. But I want you to be first in love. I want you to be first in moral excellence. I want you to be first in generosity.

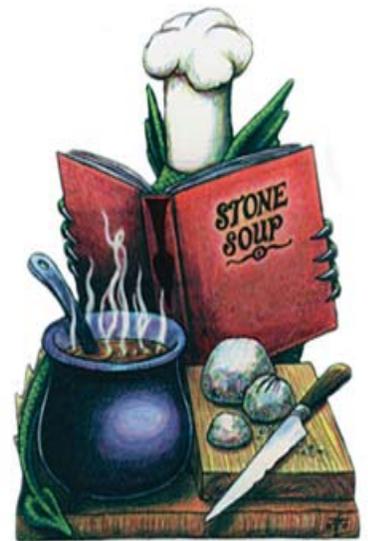
—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Mission Team Update

The Stone Soup fund raiser for 2014 was a huge success that raised over \$3000 for the food pantry. Numerous members of our community helped make this a success, including Betty Ventrella from our church. I especially want to thank everyone who came and supported this activity by enjoying the soup, music, and participating in the silent auction. Your support will help us to feed those in our greater community who, for whatever reason, are unable to adequately obtain and feed themselves and their families.

Unfortunately due to scheduling conflicts and illness the Mission Team meeting that was scheduled to meet on February 19 was postponed. It will be rescheduled in the near future.

— Dennis Whalen
Home 303.642.1435
Mobil 303.862.1501



The April Newsletter deadline is Thursday, March 27

THE NEVER ENDING FOOD DRIVE

needs your help and support; it keeps going on because poverty and hunger keep rolling along in this nation. Thanks for your support and your generous participation.



Easier than washing feet...

Have you been looking for a way to serve but can't make a long term commitment? Fellowship on Sunday mornings is for you!

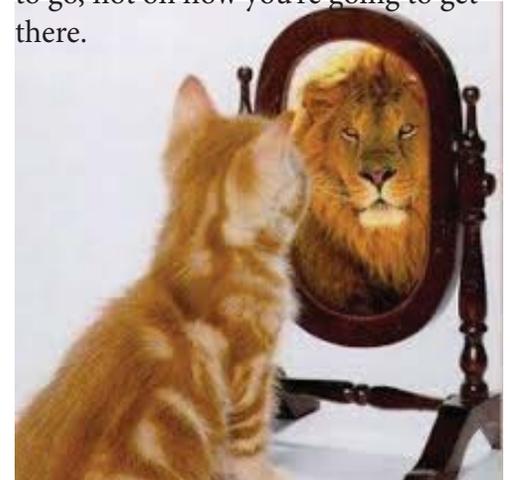
- You can try out that new recipe for appetizers, cookies, pies or whatever suits you.
- Men—this is your chance to show us what a great cook you are.
- Mothers and daughters—sign up for a date together.
- Friends—team up for a fun morning in the kitchen.
- Ask someone you don't know to help you—what a great way to get better acquainted!
- Don't want to cook? We always have goodies on hand to just set out on the table.

New to the whole thing? Let me know, I am happy to walk you through the process.

You can sign up on the sheet outside the kitchen or contact Claudia at 303-258-3447 or claudiaone@wispertel.net

Come be a part of our church family!

TIP SHEET — **FOCUS ON** what you want to become OR where you want to go, not on how you're going to get there.



March Birthdays!

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