

The Bell Tower

January 2015

NEDERLAND COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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



Dog Days . . . *

I've had my dog Chugach for more than five months now. He is pretty awesome one-on-one, or with a few people. He does great on hikes and backcountry skiing. And he is improving slowly with larger groups, in fits and starts, such as we see and hear in the occasional worship. But he still struggles with separation anxiety, and when another dog shows up, I might as well not exist!

A few Sundays ago, he was being a little more wild than normal, so we put him in the car during the worship service. He hangs out in the car a lot, and spends that time patiently gnawing on a bone, looking out the windows, and curling up in the front seat for a nap. That Sunday, however, something got the best of him, and he chewed through the passenger and driver seat belts... on my new car.

Parents, I now have a glimpse into that mix of anger (why would you do that?), ideas for rehabilitation (what can I do to promote better behavior?), and hope for maturity (when will he ever grow out of this?).

The very next day I went skiing—or, really, I sat in traffic on I-70 for most of the day. A friend watched Chugach in the morning, and put him in his crate for a few hours that afternoon. Returning home, he had discovered a magic way out of the locked kennel. Thank the sweet Lord he didn't touch the Christmas tree or my roommate's family presents! But he did tear through a long list of my belongings: tent, yoga mat, running shoes, mattress cover, two pounds of sugar cookies... Parents, again, I had that mix of anger, now personal (why would you do this *to me?*), desperation (who can help this dog?) and feelings of failure (what am I doing wrong?).

The situation isn't all that different with Nederland, and with so many of the problems around the world. Sometimes, you have a desperate passion to fix

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Happy New Year

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Presbyterian Church likes to conduct its business "decently and in order". So, we have the annual congregational meeting coming up. Official members can vote, and anyone is welcome to attend and speak. Stick around after worship on 11 January to discuss the new Elder and Deacon nominees, Hansen's compensation package, the Charter for Compassion, and to offer any comments on the overall 2015 budget.

If you're a member... be there.

Nominees for Elder

Congratulations to Nancy Harrower, Marylou Harrison & Jim Reis, who have been nominated to serve as Elders for NCPC! (Official members get to vote on their nomination on 11 Jan.)

Our denomination is named for the Greek word *presbyter*, which connotes someone who leads with wisdom. These folks will join our Session, or council of elders, as the spiritual and ad-ministry-ative leadership of our church.

Many thanks to Barbara Hardt and Jim Hubbard, who have served wonderfully for three years!

Year End — New Beginning



DECEMBER 31, 2015 —Nancy Harrower and Del Lynd were married early afternoon in a service that touched, moved and inspired many in a sanctuary that is usually not so full except on Christmas Eve.

Best wishes to Nancy and Del as they embark on their journey together. More photos follow on the next page.

New Worship Series

Our next worship series, for the month of January, is all based on the book of Ruth. She is one of the heroes of the Hebrew Bible, a mother to the lineage of Jesus, and a paragon of courage and perseverance.

Join us on Sunday morning, or follow along online at www.nederlandcpc.org/ncpc/sermons.

Christmas Eve Giving

Thanks to everyone who joined in worship on Christmas Eve! The offering we received that night for the Deacon's Fund was \$1345.37! All of that, as well as other donations before and after, will serve local neighbors in need through the coming year.

Nominees for Deacon

Congratulations to David Ford who has been nominated to serve as a Deacon for NCPC! (Official members get to vote on his nomination on 11 Jan.)

The Greek word *diakonos* was originally just the word for a waiter or someone who serves food. The early church made that a formal position, for members designated to hand out food to widows, orphans

and the poor. Eventually, the position became more generally about serving all those who need care, at their deathbeds, visitors, anyone in trouble.

David will join our Deacons, who, as one of their main duties, manage a fund for helping neighbors in need.

Thanks to Pat Ennor, who served mightily for three years!



Will Ford serenading the young couple with songs familiar to most.



Some enchanted evening...

When you find your true love...

... the sound of her laughter will sing in your dreams

... Who can explain it, who can tell you why fools give reasons, wise men never try...



Attikus Romero is Del's neighbor of just two months – he has a great future ahead of him. He doesn't drive yet so he had his parents, Paolo and Shauntae bring him to the wedding.



Bible Study

Coinciding with the new worship series, we will be offering a Bible Study on the book of Ruth. Bible Study Wednesdays at 6:30 at church.

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, 18 January, is at Salto.

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systems and issues, or help people grow so they can improve themselves. You might cultivate hope that God has a better plan in mind, challenged by all the frustration when things fall backwards. You try to seek partnerships and support. Progress happens. Failures happen.

The Bible is a history of people improving slowly, with plenty of mistakes. They develop ways of living together more peacefully, then need strategies for dealing with the guilt of not being able to make a better society as quickly as they would like. They encourage personal and spiritual growth, while seeing themselves as one people, with one destiny. They understand the world through the lens of grand hopeful experiences, and then sing songs of despair.

When we read the Bible as a single static picture of a people's relationship with God, we miss the fact that the books are written over thousands of years, with slow developments toward compassion and justice. There is room in faith for anger and frustration and shame, because what we trust is a God who follows our development. We trust in a God who works alongside and through us, to shape the world into something more like the Kingdom God has in mind. We trust in a God who is more powerful than our mistakes.

Will my dog ever sit patiently through a worship service? Maybe someday; with work and practice. Will Nederland ever solve some of its problems with personal irresponsibility? Perhaps, though it will take much more work and a holy patience. Will our world ever destroy racial judgment and violence? Unlikely in my lifetime, but we can work toward something better, drawing encouragement through moments of success. Will the Christian faith that is emerging today ever draw us past abuse and insignificance, and toward fuller meaning and joy? That is my hope. May it be yours.

– Hansen

* Just couldn't come up with a good title – Ed.

Women's Group

meets the first Sunday of each month at 4 pm. All women are welcome, whether you want to share a drink or just some laughs with new church friends! This month, 4 January, is at Salto.



The Christmas ornament fundraiser for *Stop Hunger Now* has raised \$731 already! Along with a gift from Rotary, we're nearly half way to our goal of being able to pack 10,000 meals for hungry children.

You can still donate, at 29 cents per meal. And you could spread the word by sharing the church's Facebook post!



A Proposal . . . Perhaps a Legacy?

DEAR READER, if you have read this newsletter for the past several months, then you may have seen articles and quotes regarding compassion.

Compassion? Say it to yourself. What's the first image that springs to mind? Or the first feeling you experience when you say or hear the word? Just think about it for a moment. Skip rushing to a conclusion; contemplate it.

Compassion. What is it? How do you sense it? Is it an image? A feeling – where? A sound? A taste?*

How do you feel when you are compassionate; acting with or coming from compassion? How does it feel to be the recipient of compassion? Take a moment – reflect on these questions – ask others more relevant to your circumstance . . .

When you're finished, consider going to <http://charterforcompassion.org> and signing the Charter for Compassion. Share it with others. Invite your partner or an acquaintance to take the pledge. At this writing, 110,836 have signed the charter

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING of the congregation, I will invite you to consider a step for NCPC; your vote for our church to become a partner of the Charter for Compassion. If you want to do some homework, go here: <http://charterforcompassion.org/partners>.

While doing some research on the Internet, I ran across a link that says the Presbyterian Church (USA) is the first denomination to adopt the Charter for Compassion. I haven't been able to corroborate this yet on the church or office of general assembly websites. I have e-mailed the OGA for confirmation and to learn what the national church is doing. You can see where I learned of this here: <http://www.jesusjay.org/2010/08/fetzer-institute-helps-expand-charter.html>. When you land on the page scroll down to the PC (USA) logo.

January Anniversaries!

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



January Birthdays!

10	Adrianna Heller	22	Dorothy Whalen
11	Aimee Tomlinson	22	Barbara Hardt

Missing your birthday? Tell Gary.

"It is as necessary for a poor man to give away, as for a rich man. Many poor men are more devoted worshippers of Mammon than some rich men."

— George MacDonald
Adela Cathcart, vol. 2, ch. 3

George MacDonald was a Scottish author, poet, and Christian minister. He was a pioneering figure in the field of fantasy literature and the mentor of fellow writer Lewis Carroll. C. S. Lewis said of one of MacDonald's books that it "baptized" his imagination.

Several months ago we remembered the folks who started this congregation in 1912 and constructed the sanctuary in 1915; wondering if, as a result, they had any sense of the legacy they were leaving for the community of Nederland and those of us who came after. Signing the Charter of Compassion and voting for NCPC to become a partner is a conscious step toward leaving a legacy for this community and those who come after us.

Perhaps in the year 2115 someone will ask, *"Hmm, I'm wondering if those folks in 2015 had any idea of the legacy they were leaving for our community and our church."*

— Gary Ennor

* The taste of compassion? Consider what Gibran says when we work with love; substitute compassion for love:

*And all work is empty save when there is love;
And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God.
And what is it to work with love?
It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth.
It is to build a house with affection, even as if your beloved were to dwell in that house.
It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy, even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit.
It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit . . .*

Most of us are too unconscious to notice the taste of compassion until we become ill. Now, think of a time when you were ill and a bowl of soup was placed in your hands, or a cup of hot (ginger?) tea. Ah, that's the taste of compassion!

IN OUR PRAYERS: Violet Aandres and Rich Deubel; Judy Anderson; Rev. Gibney's brother; Don and Betty Hunt; Frank Irwin; David Lynd; Karen Moss; Morggan O'Neill; Miles Pancoast and family; Rhonda Skeie and her brother Steve Holland; Bob Kochen; Atashnaa Medicine Shield; Gail and David Skinner; Jerry and Margaret Ward; Pam White; love and consideration within the church and denomination; for those who are unable to worship with us regularly; for those serving in the military; Isaiah and other foster children waiting for a family; for all those caring for aging parents; and for those struggling with the problems at issue in Ferguson and Berkeley, Missouri, Ohio, Brooklyn and beyond

Mission

Thanks to the hard work of numerous volunteers including the cub scouts, and especially the herculean efforts of the Food Pantry's Executive Director, Chris Current, the Food Pantry was able to distribute more than 90 food baskets to various families in our community.

The work to gather the food items in the days leading up to the distribution, sorting the items, getting the non-perishable items into the "baskets" ahead of time, obtaining and setting out the perishable items for people to choose what they'd like, obtaining and making available turkeys and chickens, gathering toys and clothing items, and having it all ready for distribution takes a whole community, and I'm grateful for all the help and support provided by the Nederland Community Presbyterian Church.

Preliminary indications are that the Food Pantry's grant request for a new, commercial refrigerator will be approved, allowing the collection, storage and distribution of fresh milk, which requires a significant amount of room and, thus, can't be accomplished using the currently available Food Pantry refrigerators.

Just a reminder, that the Nederland Food Pantry now has a web page at <http://www.nederlandfoodpantry.org/>

— Dennis Whalen

Youth Group

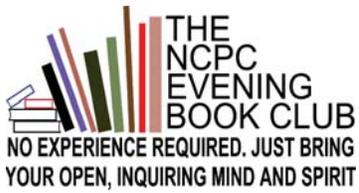
The 2014-2015 Youth Group calendar of events is published on our website! Check it out at www.nederlandcpc.org/youth-group.

4 January 11:30 – The Whole Youth Group (with the Purdue University group) for a mission project!

15 January 7 pm – The Whole Youth Group, with dessert!

1 February 11:30 – High Schoolers, with lunch

1 February 1 pm – Middle Schoolers, with snack



Book Club – Tuesday nights at 6:30 an intellectually diverse and rowdy group (diverse and intellectually rowdy?) gathers in the sanctuary, usually with snacks, to discuss a fun read. This month, 6 January, we start our new book, *A New Kind of Christianity*, by Brian McLaren.

All are welcome to join! The more perspectives we have, the more fun it's been!

(Careful, McLaren wrote an earlier book called *A New Kind of Christian*. Make sure to get the one with the subtitle, *Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith*.)

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.



Welcome Home, Liam!

*"Compassion is not an option.
It's the key to our survival."
— Karen Armstrong*



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