

New Hope News

February 2009 Newsletter

New Hope Methodist Presbyterian Church
2371 Bradway Road
North Pole, Alaska 99705
907 488-9191
newhope@mosquionet.com
newhopempc.com

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

The gentle snowflakes fall through the air to restore a heavier blanket of white upon the earth and a shiver runs through the body for the chill that seeps into my bones. Will it end? Will we avoid anymore deep, deep cold for the winter or have we simply been given a moment of reprieve? Some say the weather is finally acting like the Interior of Alaska again with the recent bitter cold spell. Others talk of how depressing it was, is, as though that blanket of white became a smothering comforter instead of a secure insulation. It reminds me of a quilt my grandmother made so many years ago that was of wool. It was so heavy that when I crawled under it I had to make sure my head remained outside of its cover or I felt I couldn't breathe.

Life can feel like that too, sometimes. The literal darkness we know of winter pulls many down deep into themselves. With the economy what it is: people being laid off, businesses in hiring freezes or shutting down, it can be unnerving for making any plans for the future. What if...takes over. Fear begins to seep in like the cold and before we know it has bitten a part of our soul. The burn hurts and we retreat some more. And on the spiral goes ever downward.

That is, unless we meet life with faith. Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." ALL things!!! Through Christ. Who strengthens me. Even the hard freeze of our world is possible to face with hope through Christ. It may mean we are on our knees and praying with all we are, layered in all our clothes, but with Christ we can and will get through the hard patches to the good and glory of God. 2 Timothy 1:7: "I have not given you a spirit of fear but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline." That power and love encourages us to be self-disciplined with our prayer and devotion to our God in our daily living. This discipline then saturates our soul as with life giving waters so that the hard times are met with hope and strength instead of fear and weakness. God has given us this power. And darkness does not understand. It has no

power to overpower the light, the love that is God. We need to remember this, especially in the deep darkness of the season, of our souls, when we are feeling low and discouraged.

Hardship does not have the power to undo us. Unless we have not attended to our souls with prayer and worship, with fellowship and study, with faith as we do at church. For then and only then we can say with confidence, "this too will pass". We need to remember this so that whatever the difficulty of the moment, we can find the strength through Christ - to keep carrying on, knowing that what is now, will not always be.

The daylight is gaining each and every day. Hallelujah! Warmer days are coming. Thanks be to God! The economy will turn around. Praises be to God Almighty! Wars will come to an end. By the grace of God! And we will be stronger and more faithful because we have been given the assurance that "I will never leave you or forsake you" Hebrews 13:5b and experience has borne this out over the years, over our lifetimes.

So when the darkness feels like it is closing in, when the cold seems to be biting a bit too hard and close and your spirit is being drug down, look to Christ. Trust in his Spirit of love and courage. Get yourself to church, open your Bible, listen for that still small voice of God and allow yourself to be nurtured into wholeness and peace, no longer smothered by that comforter but wrapped in that soothing quilt of love and compassion, that secure insulation of grace that is God's Spirit, bringing a friend who also needs to be warmed and comforted.

Blessings,

Pastor Karen

BRINGING DOWN THE BARRIERS BETWEEN US

Have you noticed that we have a lot of churches in our valley all professing the Christian faith yet each one keeping more or less to themselves as though we don't have much in common? Well the North Pole Ministerial Alliance is continuing its efforts to bring down those barriers and misconceptions. Our latest effort is through an annual service of Prayer for Christian Unity this year to be held February 17, 2009, 7p.m. at Freedom in Christ on Becky Street off of Bradway Road. This is a special worship service that will recognize our differences yet lift up our common belief in Jesus Christ as Lord, invite us to pray for one another and go out more united for our common mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ. Please make time to come and celebrate with us the blessings of being the body of Christ in all its diversity!

DID YOU KNOW...

One of the aspects of being a church is recognizing that there are seasons to our year. Just as the calendar year has a cycle of seasons: winter, spring, summer and fall, so does the liturgical year or worship year: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Common Time. And each of these seasons has a color ascribed to it: Advent-blue for royalty; Christmas-white for holiness and purity; Epiphany-green for life; Lent-purple for penitence; Easter-white for purity and resurrection; Pentecost-red for the flames and inspiration of the Spirit; Common Time-green for growth and life.

February 25th we will be starting a new season, the season of Lent. That day is called Ash Wednesday. On that day we gather as a community in worship acknowledging that we are a broken people who sin and are in need of mercy, are marked with a cross of ashes on our forehead (a tradition of penitence that comes from the Old Testament days) to remind us that we are mortal and that we need to turn back to God for mercy and new life. The season has evolved over the millennia from preparation for baptism to a time of penitence to a preparation of renewing our baptismal vows at Easter and of welcoming our risen Savior deeper into our own spirit. The presence of ashes becomes a reminder that we are God's and it is to God we need to return. The sight of ashes on someone's forehead has become an opportunity for many to witness for Christ as people notice 'you have something on your face'. This year our Ash Wednesday Service will take place Wednesday evening, February 25, 2009, at 7p.m. in the sanctuary. Please come, invite a friend to join you and remember whose you are.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Many years ago our country became embroiled in a heated debate around the issue of evolution vs. creationism taught in our schools. The debate suggested that science and religion could not co-exist or be in support of the other. In the last decade a petition has circulated for signatures by clergy across our nation of Christian and Jewish faith to be presented to our government as an alternate voice to the extreme right, that in fact, science and religion can and do co-exist very well. Years ago a tradition was begun that on a Sunday in February (Darwin's birthday is February 12th) churches would center their worship around this theme. I have done this for the last several years. It has been a powerful worship for all. This year we will be celebrating Religion and Science on February 8, 2009 at 9:30a.m. Worship will be praising God our Creator and considering the relationship between science and religion. Come with an open mind, a curious mind and let us together consider the wonder of what God has created for and with us.

THE QUESTION HAS BEEN ASKED:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE UNITED METHODIST AND/OR PRESBYTERIAN?

Well you are invited to come and join the Revs. Murray Richmond (a Presbyterian clergyman) and Karen Martin Tichenor (a United Methodist clergywoman) and find out. Saturday, February 7, 2009 from 10a.m. to 12noon we will gather in the sanctuary where Rev. Murray and Pastor Karen will speak from their own traditions educating us on what it means to be from these two denominations that make up the framework of our church. Then the floor will be opened for questions and discussion followed by a time to consider, in light of what we have learned regarding these two denominations, what it means to be a "New Hopeian" (a member of New Hope Methodist Presbyterian Church). We will have the coffee/hot water pots on and some eats to converse over so make a point of coming to church Saturday, Feb. 7 from 10a.m. to 12noon! This has been opened to any and all who are curious and interested in learning the differences and similarities that make us one. So consider yourself invited. See you there!

ENCOURAGEMENT AT HAND
[Keep this in your bible.]

THE CHALLENGE/FEELING	GOD'S RESPONSE	BIBLE VERSE
You:	God:	
'It's impossible.'	All things are possible.	Luke 18:27
'I'm too tired.'	I will give you rest.	Matthew 11:28-30
'Nobody really loves me.'	I love you.	Isaiah 43:4
'I can't go on.'	My grace is sufficient.	2
Corinthians 12:9; Ps. 91:15		
'I can't figure things out.'	I will direct your steps.	Proverbs 3:5-6
'I can't do it.'	You can do all things...	Philippians 4:13
'I'm not able.'	I am able.	2 Corinthians 9:8
'It's not worth it.'	It will be worth it.	Romans 8:28
'I can't forgive myself.'	I forgive you.	1 John 1:9; Romans
8:1		
'I can't manage.'	I will supply all your needs.	Philippians 4:19
'I'm afraid.'	I have not given you a spirit	2 Timothy
1:7		
	of fear.	
'I'm always worried and frustrated.'	Cast all your cares on me.	1 Peter 5:7
'I'm not smart enough.'	I give you wisdom.	1 Corinthians 1:30
'I feel all alone.'	I will never leave you or	Hebrews 13:5
	forsake you.	

(This order found on the Internet)

CALLING ALL YOUNG ADULTS!

Any and everyone between having graduated from High School and 30 years old are invited to the **Alaska Coffee Roasting Co. Coffee House**, 4001 Geist Road, Fairbanks, **Friday, February 20, 2009 at 6:30p.m.** We are wanting to start up a Young Adults group in our church and have decided this is a good way to begin; to come together simply for conversation, coffee/tea, eats and some good fellowship. What would excite you to gather with others near our age? Dinner together? A ski trip? What about a book study or a movie and conversation?

It is our hope that we will gather once a month and it is for the group to decide the content of what we will do when we gather. This is meant to be our group. Pastor Karen will be there the first night at the Coffee House to help us get the conversation and plans going and then the group is ours! See you there!

-Erin Hughes, Patrick Trometter and Pastor Karen

New Hope Women's Book Group will meet Monday March 9 at Marit Vick's to discuss *The Shack* by William Young. Marit will provide treats. We will also decide on the following month's book and who would like to host. Bring your book and your thoughts about this interesting and bestselling book. Questions, call Marit Vick 488-1633 or Ingrid Clauson 488-1533.

Child Development Center Fundraisers*...

Invite A Friend/Family 6:00p.m.

(A Donation for Dinner is Welcomed)

February 13 For The Love of Children - The CDC Committee will be serving **spaghetti and lasagna, salad and homemade bread** plus dessert, of course. Everyone is asked to bring their address book or at least ten addresses and stamps for a mailing to family and friends about our Child Development Center plans and asking for a financial gift.

March 13 Green Eggs and Ham-A Menu of Dr. Seuss Delights and Other Surprises. (Ham & Baked Potatoes for Adults), plus photos with Dr. Seuss, games and story time.

(Needed a person with a photo printer who would be willing to loan it so that we may take pictures of our kids with Dr. Seuss. Please give Brenda Sadler or Ingrid Clauson a call. If you want to volunteer to be the photographer, that WOULD BE GREAT!)

April 17 Tending the Garden - An Incredible **Vegetarian Buffet** - Bring Your Family's Favorite "Veggie" Casserole, Salad or Dessert, **plus** we'll have a

few tips on Gardening in Fairbanks and on Tending our "Spiritual" Garden.

May 8 Chicken BBQ....Order Ahead/Pick-up at the Church (tentative)

June 12 Fresh Strawberry Sundaes. Make Your Own Taco Salad

June 26/27 Annual Garage Sale... not a CDC fundraiser. Bake sale for CDC.

July 9 GOD Bless Our Country and Our Kids - A Gala Time with a Patriotic Bike Parade and Rodeo with Prizes; Bicycle "Physicals" and, of course, Hot Dogs and Root Beer Floats.

August 14 Berry Delights and Picnic Favorites

Sept. 11 Harvest Festival....best salmon, moose, halibut dishes and berry desserts with prizes; plus fresh garden vegetables and handicrafts for sale. Not a CDC fundraiser.

October 9 A Trip Through The Pumpkin Patch. TBA.

November 13 Annual Thanksgiving Dinner and Auctions.....what a blast!!!!
Not a CDC fundraiser.

December 11 Surprise!

**These events will not be advertised to the general public due to DEC regulations. You are welcomed, however, to invite friends to join you.*

WOMEN'S GROUP MEETING

The Women's group will meet Saturday, February 14 at 10 am. Our guest will be Esther Murray from First United Methodist to speak to us about what it means to be a United Methodist Unit. We will at a later date invite someone from the Presbyterian side to do the same. Bring a brunch item to share.

CDC FUNDRAISER BASKETS

There will be three CDC silent auction Valentine baskets beginning the first Sunday in February. The winners will be announced at the February 13th CDC fundraiser "For the Love of a Child." Congratulations to Linda File for winning the hand knit shawl and bakers dozen of books. Coming in March just in time for dog mushing and trapping, a beautiful handmade fur and leather "trappers hat."

FROM THE FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

We thought it might be fun to encourage sign ups for **FELLOWSHIP** by asking **YOU** to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, birth of a grandchild, new job, graduation, etc ...with all of us.

A **12 month calendar** is now located on the bulletin board in the narthex. Please write your name and what we'll be celebrating on the Sunday of your choice. OF COURSE, we'll also welcome those of you who just want to PROVIDE a snack on a Sunday...to do so.

Just a reminder.....**FELLOWSHIP** is a snack, not BRUNCH! It is a grand time to chit chat, laugh and have.....**fellowship**.

Thank you!
Brenda Sadler

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SUNDAY SCHOOL

TAKING A LEAP OF FAITH

When was the last time you took a leap of faith? We take them all the time and yet are unaware of them because we believe in what we are doing, we believe in Christ who strengthens us and encourages us through those leaps. For those of you who have not taken the leap of faith to formally join our church, I would like to offer to you especially, a class on the church. This will be an opportunity to learn more about what it means to be the church, why we do what we do when we do it in worship and throughout the month and year. It will be an opportunity to bring your questions of 'why....what...?' and get some answers. We will look at the vows of membership and consider what they mean in the life of the church and in our individual lives. We will consider what it means to be the body of Christ and not make a commitment to him through the church. Come Sunday mornings at 11a.m. during Sunday School, bring your questions, your gentle curiosity, and let's explore what could be your next leap of faith taken in community.

Our 2009 Theme "The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations" is beginning the implementation phase. This means we will be planning to put the ideas we've generated into the future calendar of New Hope. Join us for a Group Adult Sunday School session in the sanctuary Sunday, February 8th at 11am.

Our Children's Sunday School continues with the theme "On the Road." Look for children's participation in our church services as they begin to present what they are learning in Sunday School! Join us for an opening session in the back gathering room at 11am.

COMING SOON...VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2009
Discovery Canyon ~ Exploring the Wonders of the Word!
June 1-5 9:30am-12:30pm

Each day will present an animal with a new faith word for the day.
Help is needed in every area! Email Geri Benshoof at benshf@polarnet.com or see Lori in the office and she can contact Geri.

Thank you in advance for your help as VBS will not be possible without you!

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

LOGOS

LOGOS is in need of your help! The desire to see a fruitful and full ministry is on the hearts of all involved; but we need kids... What an awesome opportunity they have to sing, play, learn about who their God really is in their lives and spend time around a dinner table chatting about all life has brought them.

It is a great way to get the mid week pick me up; for the kids and for the parents; we want you as well. If you are one of those people who would love to find a spot where you can give of your time but are maybe unsure that you have what we need... We need you!

LOGOS is in need of people willing to lead our Bible time even if it is once a month guided by the curriculum we have selected; or maybe you already have an idea of something you would like to share. We are also in need of someone who may feel gifted in the area of games and someone once a month to do crafts. Even if you think that you do not know how but your heart is saying try it; we agree, come be part of our team that is helping us equip our kids for their futures. The last spot that we need is for cleanup help. The cooks do such a wonderful job feeding us that we would love to have people available to serve them in the cleaning afterward.

These are our children and what a blessing it is to be a part of their lives! Come and join in on the fun.

Contact Kelli @ 978-9089 or email me at incessantink@gmail.com for more information.

YOUTH GROUP

Have you hugged your youth today? If not go out do so now it is quite a blessing; on both sides :)

It is **30 Hour Famine** time and we have youth on a mission! Be watching for ways to help them raise money for the cause. The dates of the actual event are now scheduled for March 27-28.

Any questions contact Erin or Patrick after service or email Kelli at incessantink@gmail.com.

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

North Pole Food Pantry – Jubilee Center

A reminder that the 4th Sunday of each month is *North Pole Food Pantry Sunday*. Please bring donated food items and place them in the baskets in the church foyer. Betty Page and Kay Sanders deliver the food items to St. Jude's Episcopal after the 4th Sunday drop off. Particular needs currently are peanut butter and canned meats.

The Touch of the Master's Hand

By Myra Brooks Welch

Submitted by Keith Genter

It was battered and scarred, and the auctioneer thought it hardly worth his while to waste his time on the old violin, but he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bid, good people", he cried, "Who starts the bidding for me? One dollar, one dollar, do I hear two? Two dollars, who makes it three? Three dollars once, three dollars twice, going for three."

But, no. From the room far back a grey haired man came forward and picked up the bow, then wiping the dust from the old violin and tightening up the strings, he played a melody, pure and sweet, as sweet as the angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer with a voice that was quiet and low said "What now am I bid for this old violin?" as he held it aloft with its bow.

"One thousand, one thousand, do I hear two? Two thousand, who makes it three? Three thousand once, three thousand twice, going and gone", said he. The audience cheered but some of them cried, "We just don't understand. What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply, "The Touch of the Master's Hand."

And many a man with a life out of tune, and battered and scarred with sin is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd, much like the old violin.

A 'mess of pottage', a glass of wine, a game –and he travels on. "He is going once and going twice. He's going and almost gone." But the Master comes and the foolish crowd never can quite understand the worth of a soul and the change that's wrought by the touch of the Master's hand.

February 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 CDC Meeting 6pm	3	4 LOGOS 3:45-6:30pm	5 Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm	6 Youth Group 7pm	7 Denomination Class 10am-noon
8 Worship 9:30am Sunday School 11am	9	10 Visitation Team 10am	11 LOGOS 3:45-6:30pm	12 Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm	13 CDC Fundraiser "For the Love of Children" 6pm	14 Women's Group 10am
15 Worship 9:30am Sunday School 11am CDC Meeting 12pm	16 Council Meeting 6:30pm	17 Service of Prayer for Christian Unity 7pm @ Freedom in Christ Church	18 LOGOS 3:45-6:30pm	19 Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm	20 Young Adults @ Alaska Coffee House 6:30pm Youth Group 7pm	21
22 Worship 9:30am Sunday School 11am	23	24 Visitation Team 10am	25 Ash Wednesday Service 7pm	26 NPMA Luncheon 12noon Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm	27	28 Men's Breakfast 8:00am

Take a look at :
www.newhopempc.com

It is a great source of updated announcements and information for our church.

February Birthdays and Anniversaries

3rd ~ Karl Reid
4th ~ Don Elgin
5th ~ Hunter Bengs
6th ~ Ashley Anderson
7th ~ Bobby Logan
8th ~ Joe Krizek
9th ~ Dan File
12th ~ Janet Jahn
13th ~ Patrick Trometter
14th ~ Dennis & Darcey Sharp
15th ~ Jim Anderson, Chanda File
18th ~ Sarah Elgin
19th ~ Dennis Sharp, Margene Abrams
Tim & Deborah Beck
20th ~ Amy Samuel
23rd ~ Hannah Beck
27th ~ Curt Stables
28th ~ Richard Ross

New Hope Church is a spiritual body of believers in Christ who nurture Christian disciples through reverent worship and responsive religious education. Cultivating this ministry produces the fruits of Outreach and Witness.

- Effective worship shall unit and honor the different strands of our congregation.
- Responsive religious education will meet all in their stages of faith and address a variety of needs and interests.

Sunday Worship Service: 9:30 am

Sunday School: 11:00 am

Church Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday 9:00am – 1:00pm

Pastor Karen's Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
10:00am to 12:00noon
and by appointment

Submissions to the monthly newsletter are always welcome. Please email articles, stories, quotes, etc...anything you think is newsworthy to newhope@mosquitonet.com by the 25th of each month.

Thank you!