

New Hope News March 2009 Newsletter

**New Hope Methodist Presbyterian Church
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PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

The light is growing! The light is growing! Do you see it? Have you stopped long enough to take it in?! Can you almost hear the earth sighing at its presence and warmth? An amazing gift this light. Bright. Warm. Allows us to see our way. Lifts spirits. Restores hope that things as they are now will NOT last forever. Hmm. Are you beginning to think of another light that does these things and even more? Yep, me too. The light of Christ. That redemptive light of God that came and dwelt on earth in the form of a human, God incarnate, so that we would see God's love among us. It is this human Jesus, the divine Christ who living as one of us went so far as to die upon a cross for us. Taking on the burden of our sins and being that ultimate sacrifice that we would know a whole new freedom, a new purpose and identity through Christ with our God.

So it is that we are in the season of Lent. A time of the Christian year when we look honestly at ourselves and the state of our souls. A time of year when we repent or ask forgiveness for the sins we have committed against God. Things like hurting our family or friends; speeding on the roads; turning our backs on someone in need; ignoring God's presence; refusing to follow Christ's lead; rejecting the light that will save our very souls. Sin is anything that breaks relationship with God. So think about that. What have you done that has broken that loving relationship? What do you need to confess, to admit you have or have not done? Then speak it to God. Lay it at the feet of Christ and ask for forgiveness. As many times as you need to. Dare to be truly honest with God. It isn't enough that God already knows what you have done wrong. It has everything to do with do you know what you have done wrong and are you sorry and willing to stop? Are you willing to admit the truth, repent (be truly sorry and turn around/away from the sin and let God become your one and only? Your one and only God and desire of your soul?

That is a hard one. Hard because we have let so many other things and people become our priority in life. We do not trust this God of ours to have our best interest at heart. This God who was and is willing to give us God's only son Jesus Christ as a sacrifice to show us just how much in love God is with each

and every one of us. What else does God need to do to get our attention and our devotion? Consider that for a moment. What else does God have to do to get you to finally and completely give yourself to God through Christ? That is the question of Lent. That is the question of the hour and moment. You matter. Period. You matter to God. Because you matter God will continue to pursue you until you finally let go and let God into your life. Let that moment be now. Let that hour be this one. Tell God, tell Christ that you wholly, willingly repent of your sins, the sins of... (you fill in the blank). Then ask God for forgiveness for those sins, receive that forgiveness through Christ and commit yourself and all that you are to the loving, trusting relationship that God would have you live. Then you will be ready to truly celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ who died for you and your sins. Then you will personally know the joy and jubilation of Christ's gift of mercy for you and find a freedom to share that gift with everyone you know and love. Even the stranger on the street. That is when the kingdom of God will come and be known to all, when each one of us accepts Christ as our Savior and welcomes God home to our very souls.

In the holy promise of the season,
Pastor Karen

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOOD NEWS

You know that we have four gospels to our Bible, right? You know that each one has a different author, correct? Did you know that the first three are called the Synoptic Gospels? How come? There was only one Jesus, yet isn't it interesting that each gospel tells his story differently with some interesting similarities? This Lent we are taking a serious look at these questions and more as we journey through the gospels or good news doing a comparison between their telling of the man and purpose of the one called Jesus Christ. Come join us each Wednesday evening (March 4 – April 1) beginning at 6:30p.m. with a soup supper. Bring your Bibles and a curious spirit. And if you are feeling bold, bring a friend! See you there.

IN NEED OF A YOUTH WORKER

It is with great sadness that we report Kelli Pelham, our Youth Worker since last fall has resigned her post with us effective February 24, 2009. Due to some personal issues she feels unable to continue with her work at this time. We need to keep her in our prayers that these issues will resolve and she find healing.

With her absence we need to find a replacement as soon as possible to pick up the responsibilities of leading our youth groups as well as our LOGOS after school program. If you are at least 23 years of age, have an interest in working with young people, love God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, would be willing to teach from the Scriptures and have some fun then this may just be the job for you!

Please contact the office for an application and for more information regarding the position.

Please keep the church and PSR in prayer for finding a Youth Worker and soon!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - Learning in Community

A Devoted Life - Bible Study Opportunities

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42)

With March comes the start of two new group Bible studies at New Hope. The first will be on Wednesdays leading up to Easter, taught by Pastor Karen, and take place over a simple soup and bread supper. It will meet in the church foyer from 6:30 to 8 pm.

The second opportunity is a women's study on prayer Thursdays at the church starting March 19th from 6:15-7:00pm, led by Cathy Johnson. The "Prayer –Too Busy Not to Pray" study guide by Bill Hybels will be handed out at the first meeting.

Invite someone to attend Bible study with you, including the small group studies we enjoy on Sundays. Linking into a loving, learning, worshipping community is a key to personal growth and life satisfaction. Is there someone in your life who needs this link?

ANNOUNCING - New Hope's 2009 VBS - "Discovery Canyon"

June 1-5, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

"The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations" - Our 2009 Theme

Author - Robert Schnase, Abingdon Press

Since you are a part of the New Hope Congregation, you are aware of the joy we receive from this community of faith. Perhaps you have a long tradition of connection with a church that values thoughtful discussion, deep personal faith and commitment to the surrounding community and world. Friendships that have developed over the years, family bonds, and strong memories bind you to those you meet to share in worship, study and fellowship. You may have a long

personal commitment to one of the mainline denominations that anchor us. These are all good reasons to be a part of the New Hope community.

Grateful as we are for the anchors we enjoy at New Hope, we realize that the future is calling us to step beyond our comfort zone and sharpen our focus to include those now outside our faith community. Like other mainline churches, we have learned that the reality is that decline is occurring nationwide due to declines in younger people attending, higher expenses and aging constituencies. These are difficult words to hear. Yet as we look around at the traditional church we see this pattern developing locally, and in congregations far away.

How can this alarming trend be reversed? What can be done? We do not want to take a defensive posture in light of Schnase's challenge. Instead, we want to take a forward-thinking, positive, optimistic approach to these facts. We want to reverse this trend and empower our congregation to step into the future with vigor and energy. The traditional church has a mission and a message, a strength and stability that is needed in our time.

This past January we spent five weeks reading and discussing Schnase's book, learning about the five practices vibrant churches employ, practice, and continually perfect. We heard over and over that growing churches practice radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity. Groups met to evaluate where we are in these areas.

Radical Hospitality

To date, the Radical Hospitality class has met to put together its main objectives. These objectives for New Hope Church are:

- Strategic Goal 1: Be intentional about inviting the unchurched or underchurched into the body of Christ.
- Strategic Goal 2: Increase participation in all aspects of church life while serving all age categories, with the goal to lower the average age of constituents.

First, we will be identifying ways to make our church visitor friendly and increasingly welcoming in its practices. Council committees will be challenged to help facilitate programs, events and ideas designed to meet these objectives. There will be clean-up, new bulletin board displays, signage, personal invitation flyers, permanent name tags, and an emphasis on inviting those who have stopped coming to church and those who have never come. This will take an effort by all to intentionally invite friends, neighbors, co-workers, family, service providers; anyone & everyone who Christ would call into his family. Few people

will come into a new situation without an invitation and a promise to "meet you there". Word of mouth is still one of the most powerful tools available to us.

To meet the second goal, Schnase challenges us to consider in every ministry, how we can change one thing-one practice-to accommodate younger adults. Every group will be challenged to have the discussion on how one intentional change could be implemented to point their ministry in this new direction.

Over this year, the 5 Practices Groups will meet to select strategic objectives and work our plans to bring their focused practice more actively into the life of our church.

Some tasks will be easy; others will be difficult. The key is that we work together to accomplish meaningful change in bringing the joy and community we have found in Christ to our neighborhood and our world.

What an exciting and hopeful year we have ahead!

Linda File / Christian Education Director

New Hope Women's Book Group will meet Monday March 9th 6:00pm 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.

NEW HOPE Open Arms Child Development Center News

Later this month a congregational meeting will be held to consider a Phase One plan for the new Christian Education Wing / Open Arms Center. The architect, along with the building committee, is focusing on an adapted building plan which would build half of the building in the first year of construction. Lowering initial costs, being able to use the building sooner and implement a beginning Child Development Center to generate income would be the result. Watch for the meeting date in weekly church bulletins.

We continue with fundraising ideas, including our current effort to send letters to businesses, friends and family, sharing our vision and asking for their support. Letters, envelopes and brochures are available in the church foyer. We're asking everyone to consider sending a few letters to people in their circle of life.

Fundraising Dinner

Friday, March 13th 6:00pm

Green Eggs and Ham-A Menu of Dr. Seuss Delights and other surprises, plus photos with Dr. Seuss, games and story time.

PORTAL Presentation 7:00pm

Many home owners are thinking about home for summer work that should be done....if only the money were available. The PORTAL may be able to help out. The program will include a brief overview of PORTAL services, a time for general questions and the distribution of related materials. Light refreshments will also be served.

As our church begins the final plans for the construction of Phase 1 of the New Hope Open Arms Child Development Center this summer, we will be hosting a variety of programs focusing on green construction, energy efficiency, and other issues that we as a church community can do to be better STEWARDS of God's world.

PORTAL Presents **"Understanding Your Energy Rebate/Retrofit Options"**

Friday, March 13th
7:00p.m. to 8:30p.m.
at

New Hope Methodist Presbyterian Church

The program is free. No registration necessary.

For information contact: Brenda Sadler 488-0655 (message) bsadler05@hotmail.com
or Susan Keltner at PORTAL 455-HEAT (455-4328) susan@cchrc.org

A Tisket, A Tasket, an Open Arms Easter Basket

Beautiful baskets for Easter are in the works for our next Open Arms Fundraiser. Scour your home for classy new or gently used items that could work into theme baskets. Ideas are gifts you've received but not used, or planned to give but didn't, new toiletries, new or like-new plush or other toys, new packages of candy, items for men such as fishing things, new craft accessories, yarn, quilting, stamping or scrapbooking accessories; the possibilities for great basket contents are endless! We would like folks to put together Easter baskets in the range of around \$25 to \$30 each. (Also need nice empty baskets and "grass".) Bring them marked "For Baskets - Open Arms".

If you don't feel comfortable putting together your own basket the Women's group will do it for you. You provide the necessary ingredients:

- *Baskets – pastel, white, spring-like colors
- * Filler - not the cheap cellophane grass but tissue paper, paper crimped filling or something of that nature
- *Wire ribbon - approx. 2 "wide in a variety of pastel, spring colors or curling ribbon.
- * CLEAR cellophane to wrap the baskets
- * Easter candies individually wrapped
- * Special ingredients to the age and gender in mind

If you don't want to shop, we'll do that too. Simply write out a check to New Hope and put CDC Easter Basket Fundraiser in the memo line.

Easter baskets will be prepared on Saturday, March 14, at the church. The women's group invites anyone with an interest in beautiful basket preparation to come and help. Donations of items for baskets can be brought to the church from now through the 14th. The baskets will be sold at the Eielson Bazaar on Saturday, March 21st.

Questions call Ingrid 488-1533, Brenda 488-0655

Silent Auction Items

Two items are available for the March Silent Auction.

- Painting by Ardena Mowrey, minimum bid \$100.00
- Beaver trappers hat by Marit Vick, minimum bid \$150.00

The bid sheets and items will be available the whole month of March with proceeds going towards the new CDC building.

Women's Group Meeting

The Women's Group will meet on Saturday, March 14th to put the CDC Easter Baskets together. Please bring a brunch item to share. All women, young and old are welcome.

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.

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Food Pantry at the North Pole Jubilee Center

The pantry is in particular need of: peanut butter, canned meats, microwaveable soups and noodles (i.e. ramen), breakfast bars, and snack foods (i.e. fruit roll-ups, raisins, cheese/crackers). All donated food items are taken to the pantry after the worship service on the 4th Sunday of each month. Please place your items in the food pantry baskets located in the narthex.

Habitat For Humanity Apostle House

Please contact Lynne Krizek (488-1244 or email krizek@mosquitonet.com) if you would like to be considered as a volunteer work team member this summer. The amount of time you donate is up to you – a few hours, half day, all day, once a week.

Kaktovik Volunteer Work Team

A small caravan of vacationing New Hope Church members is planning a scenic drive up the Haul Road to Prudhoe the second week in June. Some are continuing on to Kaktovik by air (leaving campers/RVs in Prudhoe) to work on the Kaktovik Presbyterian Church. The main project is to paint the exterior and complete work on a bathroom in the church. Most of the plumbing materials are already at the church and at this time it is believed that sending construction supplies by barge is not necessary. Contact Joe or Lynne Krizek (488-1244) if you are interested in taking a vacation to the farthest reaches of the land of the midnight sun and then hopping over to Kaktovik to help our sister church with its building needs. This is a pay-your-own-way trip. Fundraising efforts will commence in the fall for a larger scale combination work team and VBS trip next summer.

March Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1st ~ Josef Galath Schruf
- 5th ~ Karl & Phyllis Reid
- 6th ~ Jeannette Gaul
- 9th ~ Dakota Sharp, Robyn Beck
- 10th ~ Mary Ann Walton
- 11th ~ Terri Austin
- 15th ~ Winn Johnson
- 17th ~ Marji Illingworth
- 18th ~ Lindsey Elgin, Danielle Beks
- 19th ~ Phyllis Reid, Bob & Kathy Bird
- 20th ~ Chris Koenen, Kelley Stables
- 21st ~ Pat Thurman
- 28th ~ Tim Beck, Amy Weber

March 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship 9:30am Sunday School 11am	2 CDC Meeting 6pm	3	4 LOGOS 3:45- 6:30pm LENT BIBLE STUDY 6:30-8pm	5 Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm	6	7
8 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME Worship 9:30am Sunday School 11am	9 Book Group Meeting @ Marit's 6pm WEEK of SPRING BREAK	10 Visitation Team 10am	11 LENT BIBLE STUDY 6:30-8pm	12 Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm	13 CDC Fundraiser "Green Eggs & Ham" 6pm PORTAL 7-8:30pm	14 Women's Group Meeting 10am
15 Worship 9:30am Sunday School 11am CDC	16 Council Meeting 6:30pm	17	18 LOGOS 3:45- 6:30pm LENT BIBLE STUDY 6:30-8pm	19 Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm BIBLE STUDY 6:15-7:00pm	20	21
22 ONE GREAT HOUR of SHARING Congregational Meeting 9:20am Worship 9:30am	23	24 Visitation Team 10am	25 LOGOS 3:45- 6:30pm LENT BIBLE STUDY 6:30-8pm	26 Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm BIBLE STUDY 6:15-7:00pm	27	28 Men's Breakfast 8am
29 Worship 9:30am Congregational Meeting Sunday School 11am	30	31				

To Our New Hope Children:

You are invited to
GREEN EGGS AND HAM NIGHT
at
OUR CHURCH

FRIDAY, MARCH 13TH at 6:00

Great food and games.
Have your picture taken with Dr. Suess!!!!!

**(Your folks are invited, too for ham and baked
potatoes)**

For Reservations call 488-9191 BY MARCH 10TH
Bring A Friend or Two!!!
**(All in our church family...big and small...are
invited.)**

7:00 The PORTAL Presentation for Adults
Games and a Dr. Suess Movie for the Younguns'

**Color your best Green Eggs and Ham and bring to
the dinner to show us your work!**

Color page attached in a separate email

**Take a look at :
www.newhopempc.com**

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

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