

Annual Report
to
the Congregation of New Hope Presbyterian Church

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2010 Pastor Report to the Congregation

By: Rev. Andrew Plocher

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What a joy it is to look back over such a full and wonderful year!

If you haven't already, please take the opportunity to read the reports of the committees of the church and revel in the wonder of all that we do! None of this would be possible without you and we are truly blessed with your many gifts. Your passionate talents, energy, and dedication form the body of this beloved community of Christ – indeed the body of Christ. Thank you for the countless things that you have done to help sustain and build up our beloved community!

It is hard for me to believe that it has been a year and a half since I first came to New Hope. How time flies when we are having fun and are so busy with wonderful activities!

This has been a year full of activities, of worshipping, of serving and growing together. While we have sustained the activities signature to New Hope we have also begun to look forward. With worshipping together, serving our neighbors together, supping together, and studying together we have started to stretch out our limbs of evangelism. I have enjoyed the studies with Session on Thursday evenings, our Wednesday night book study in the Spring, and the studies with our Adult Education on Sunday mornings, as we have opened up conversations about our spirituality, church growth, and change. This past year I have felt the Spirit building energy and beginning to push, nudge, and shove us. I hope that you can feel it too!

As we enter into a new year together, I give thanks for your adaptability this last year. We have tried a few new things in worship and are beginning to entertain greater changes in the life of our congregation. In the coming year, a team of leaders will begin to train with our Synod in learning about Transformation in our congregation, our Session will guide us in our dreaming and doing, and there will be more changes in how we worship and how we engage our visitors and our neighbors. We will strive for a more 'blended' worship experience, for continued opportunities for fellowship, for spiritual growth, and for worshipping and serving together. Not everything that we have done in the past will stay the same, some things will change, others will remain and be rearticulated as to why we do them. As a small congregation, a little church with a big heart, we have to care for ourselves as well as for the world around us. Indeed we must sometimes be like Mary and stop our work and just sit at the feet of Jesus and remember who we are.

The year ahead is exciting! Throughout, I encourage you to risk stretching yourselves and your comfort zones. Things will be fun and energizing, but also frustrating at times. Keep an open mind and an open heart. Please pray for the session and for our congregation, and please do not hesitate to speak your mind and ask questions. We will be navigating a world unknown, a future full of promise and hope. 2011 promises to be a full year – not just busy, but full in the wholeness of our Creator, a year of doing and being.

Friends, thank you for an outstanding 2010. It is an honor to call myself your pastor and I look forward to the days and years ahead!

In the love and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'AD' with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

2010 Worship Ministry Report to the Congregation

By: Roy Canagarajah

I would like to thank the members of the Worship Committee who helped me in my duties: Kathy Marcy, Nancy Elmgren, Peggy Gust, and Angie Shumway. I would also like to thank the Reverend Andrew Plocher for his guidance during this past year.

There are, however, many others who help to make worship at New Hope a meaningful experience: the individuals who greet you when you come in the door giving you a bulletin and a hug; the acolyte who brings the light into our midst, reminding us all that Jesus is the Light of the World, and then taking the light out into the world for all to see; the individual who does the Children's Talk, teaching our young what it means to be a Christian; the individuals who make our puppets come to life and make us laugh, all the while teaching a lesson for both young and old; the liturgist who helps lead the service, reading the Bible passages and leading us in prayer; the ushers who collect the offering without which we could not keep the doors open and continue our outreach mission; the elders who serve communion; the choir that inspires us as they sing the anthem. I am not going to try to list them all as I would surely miss someone.

During the course of this year, we introduced some important changes to our worship order under the guidance of Reverend Plocher. These included singing more regularly contemporary hymns, regular singing of the Psalms, and extended time for children to stay in main worship until the readings are done and occasional trials of keeping the kids for the whole service. The committee intends to review these changes in January 2011 to assess the experience of session and consult with the whole congregation before making these changes permanent or make additional revisions to this pattern so the worship experience is enriching and spiritual to all.

We continued our special worship events on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Longest Night and Easter Sunday with our Sunrise Service around the cross. At Easter and again at Christmas, flowers dedicated to love ones adorned our sanctuary. And on Christmas Eve our service of lessons and carols was so full we had to bring out the folding chairs! Our Christmas pageant, "Operation Baby King", was presented by the children on Sunday December 26th, 2010. Thanks again to Mrs. Kluska for her continued commitment and effort in this area.

Reverend Plocher is dedicated to helping us grow, not just in numbers, but also in faith. With Andrew at the helm we at New Hope look forward to changing and growing even more in 2011.

2010 Building and Grounds Ministry Report to the Congregation

By Eileen Hillmuth

Last winter's snow removal costs put our building & grounds budget into shock! Fortunately spring brought with it flowers and a rejuvenation of our spirits.

Our spring clean up was a great success with many busy bees working together. We cleaned up and raked leaves from the flowerbeds, trimmed bushes and trees, mulched and cleaned windows. While on the roof we accessed damage to the snow brakes from the last winter's snowfalls and cleaned gutters. The front steps that were damaged by salt were repaired with replacement of some of the block. It was a very busy day and a lot was accomplished despite the extreme heat.

Summer brought in our paint crew. Thanks to Rev. Andrew and everyone who helped get our sanctuary and front hallway painted. What a wonderful difference!

This fall we checked our sediment pond for overgrowth and replaced some of the fence rails that were broken. Tile floors were cleaned and waxed and the sanctuary and office carpets were cleaned with the hope of replacing them soon. Our snow removal contract was reviewed and we discussed closing the front steps for the winter to prevent further salt damage.

The front steps were closed in December and will remain closed for the winter due to icing and liability issues. We have had snows requiring plowing and salting before the end of 2010; not salting the steps has saved a little on salt and will save us damage to the steps.

A decision was made to change cleaning services as of Feb. 2011 in an effort to keep the church looking clean and welcoming. Our new service is Clean Net, a licensed and bonded company, that should save us approximately \$20 a month on cleaning costs as well as give us a better accounting of what is being done and when.

Thanks to everyone who pitched in to help keep our building and grounds looking worthy to be called a house of God.

2010 Family Ministry Report to the Congregation

By Darlene Gebicke

Family life at New Hope continues to be a very busy and exciting time in the life of the church. We had very few members but many people pitched in to help, when ask. Gail Paulson and Peggy Gust were the body of the committee. We lost the talents of Kiok Liem this year as her life took a different direction in another church. Our good friend Lisa Graff retired to Delaware with her husband and we miss her input especially with Women's Group. She is still a part of us as she will host a retreat for the "church ladies" in the spring.

We started the year with our traditional Lenten Dinners at which I realized how important these meals are to our church family. Whether it is the bonding with the children or just catching up with each other, people looked forward to this special time. Around 50% of the congregation attended the meals.

Gail Paulson and Art Herbig continued to bring in birthday cakes the first Sunday of the month while other church members volunteered for coffee hours the other Sundays. Our church picnic was held in June as we said goodbye to two church families. It is always sad to see people leave

but both families were beginning a new chapter in their lives.

Supper for Six continued with much success, the final gathering at a restaurant that included everyone in dinner group. It was great, the brainchild of Nancy Elmgren.

As you can see, Family, possibly to be retitled this year, is about nurturing, caring and just “being there” for the congregation.

2010 Mission Ministry Report to the Congregation

By: Kathy Marcy and Yolanda Carrera

The slogan “A small church with a big heart” pretty much depicts one of our priorities as a congregation: our commitment to share. The Mission Committee has the most gratifying responsibility of all the committees; as a congregation, we reach out and touch the lives of young and old, both locally and globally. In this time of economic downturn, we hear from many that the need for help has grown but contributions have diminished. They are appreciative that New Hope continues to support them with time, money and goods (food, backpacks, layettes, etc.). Please check the bulletin board to read some of the heartwarming letters of gratitude we have received from many of the organizations we support.

During 2010, we had the opportunity to continue supporting many of the organizations with whom we have had long lasting relationships. As in years past, we have also extended our hand to new groups and participated in disaster relief efforts as needed. Below is a list of some of the work our congregation has accomplished this past year:

New Hope donates 10% of its pledged income to National Capital Presbytery as *Unified Mission* support – last year this came to \$15,000.

We have ongoing collections (in the front hallway) for:

- Non-perishable foods for *Olney Help*'s food pantry
- Sample size toiletries for the *Home Builders Care Assessment Center (HBCAC)* - formerly known as the Men's Emergency Shelter
- Old cell phones for *Cell Phones for Soldiers*
- Campbell's canned goods labels for the *Red Cloud Indian School* in Pine Ridge, South Dakota

We donated \$300 a quarter to both *Olney Help* for emergency family needs and to *Laytonville Havens Women's Shelter* for transportation and medical needs.

As members of the Presbyterian Church, we participated in several special offerings throughout

the year: *One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, World Communion/Peacemaking, and Christmas Joy.*

And each month, the children collect loose change from the congregation. For the first half of the year, we collected money for Nickels for Nets to buy long-lasting insecticide –treated bed nets to prevent malaria in Africa. In September we combined what the children had collected with about \$200 of mission funds and sent \$1000 to the UN’s *Nothing But Nets* campaign. Our new campaign is called *Fish For Change* which supports a tilapia fish pond project in Haiti. We have sent them an initial offering of \$250 from our portion of the 2010 Pentecost offering.

Throughout the year, we were busy with various projects here and around the world.

Winter:

- As the year began, we learned of the devastation caused by the earthquake in *Haiti*. Combined with generous contributions from our New Hope family, we were able to send Presbytery a check for \$1740.
- In January and again in February the children made 75 lunches for the *HBCAC* in Rockville
- For the *Super Bowl of Caring*, the youth greeted us at the front door to collect \$1 and a can of food from each of us. The canned goods were donated to Olney Help and the money was used to buy cereal for the *Home Builders Care Assessment Center*.
- Mr. Chandran Williams, the director of *Y Gro*, an educational program in *Sri Lanka*, made a presentation to the Adult Sunday School Class. Those that attended donated \$820 to help them continue their work.
- Many of our church members participated in *Thanksgiving in February*, a community based fund raiser where participating restaurants donate 10% of their receipts to Interfaith Works in Montgomery County to help feed those in need.

Spring:

- The children put together 31 “Easter bags” for children at the *Women’s Domestic Violence Shelter*.
- Though we did not put a team together to participate in *Rebuilding Together Montgomery County*, we donated \$500 to support them financially.
- In response to the earthquake in Chile, we put together 37 *Hygiene Kits* during an intergenerational Sunday School class.
- Though we were not able to participate in the 14th Annual *Shelter Walk ‘n Roll* to benefit the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless which took place in Rockville, we donated \$500 which got our name on the t-shirt and in promotional materials at the walk.
- Our annual *infant layette collection* provided 8 new mothers in Montgomery County with limited resources to provide for their new baby.
- Our two big fund raisers were again held this year – the *Yard Sale* and the 10th Annual *Tad Marsh Memorial Open*.

Summer:

- This year we again went to Mexico to build a house in partnership with *Constructores Para Cristo (CPC)*. Our construction team was small but we also had 2 doctors with us

who worked in the Medical Clinic. Due to financial constraints, we will have to forego our trip to Mexico in 2011 but are considering a Mission trip closer to home.

- A team of 6 people went to Cumberland, MD to participate in their *NAILS* project.
- We assembled 30 *backpacks* for our social worker to help make the school year a little easier on those with great need.

Fall:

- We sent funds to *Y Gro, Ecuadent* (a medical mission project in Ecuador), *CPC* in support of Diane Davis's bike ride for education in Piedras Negras, and *Interfaith Works* of Montgomery County. We donated Giant gift cards to *St. Peter's Social Concerns Office* to help with the increased need at Thanksgiving.

Christmas:

- We held our *20th Annual Alternative Gift Market* which also raised funds for *Olney Help* through the sale of refreshments, *Habitat for Humanity*, *Interfaith Works*, and *Montgomery County Child Welfare Services*.
- In December we visited *Friends House* and shared the joy of the season.
- And we don't want to forget the *Tree of Stars* which donated gifts to our social worker for children who would have little or nothing for Christmas without help from others.

The Mission Committee strives to represent New Hope with the goal of sharing with our brothers and sisters the blessings we continually receive and the love of God. Our committee is very diligent and focused but we could never be successful without the congregation's continued support, not only with money, but with time, effort, and prayers. What keeps our committee strong and vibrant is the involvement and devotion of specific individuals who go all out and we take this opportunity to thank them: Donna (Millard) Dettling, Eileen Hillmuth, Darlene Kranz, Jim Marcy, the Rev. Andrew Plocher. We also want to thank the spouses of the committee for their assistance and patience.

In closing, we thank you, New Hope, for your participation in our projects and events, your pledge to the Mission budget, your generous donations when asked, and your support of our fund raisers. The size of our congregation allows us all the chance to be part of any of the committees. We ask that you consider joining us this new year as we go forth and continue our work and experience this wonderful feeling of sharing God's love.

2010 Christian Education Report to the Congregation

By: Shelley Kluska

The end of the 2009-2010 school year was celebrated with the special recognition of our dedicated Sunday school teacher duos teaching our youngest students which included: Sandy/Mark Anderson, Roy/Angeline Canagarajah, Shelley/Kevin Kluska, Yolanda/Jessica Carrera, Jim Marcy/Cheryl Shaw, Frank/Trent Emery, and Nancy/Kurt Elmgren. Paula Wood was recognized for her amazing dedication to the middle aged youth as she led them through a

full year of discovery. Adult Sunday school has been spearheaded by Andrew Plocher, with support from Kurt Elmgren and Roy Canagarajah.

The Sunday school began at 9:45 AM and concluded at 10:45 AM. Sunday school attendance continues to average 4 to 6 children per Sunday. The children are divided into two groups – one for those above 9 years and one for those below. We finished the 2009-2010 year using B.I.G. (Believe in God) **“Follow the Bible”** curriculum for the smaller kids and started the 2010-2011 year using **“One Room Schoolhouse”**. Sandy Haldane has graciously volunteered to teach the younger class on an on-going basis and has recently started using curriculum focused on the 23rd Psalm. Paula Wood taught Sunday school for 9 year olds and above (4th grade and up). The curriculum was: eMerge: Developing Youth as Fully Developed Disciples. Upon completion of the curriculum, the class was transitioned to Shelley Kluska and Yolanda Carrera to teach from **“Combos”**.

Children’s Worship continues to be held on an as needed basis during the regular worship service immediately following the Children’s Message. It is attended by an average of 8 to 12 children, ranging from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Congregational members volunteer to conduct the lessons which are based on the weekly lectionary. The duration of children’s worship continues to be modeled after the adult worship service. The children open with a hymn, offer up prayers, repeat the Apostles’ Creed, collect offering, sing the Gloria Patri, listen to a lesson and do an activity and close with a benediction. By modeling the regular worship service, children are expected to be better prepared to transition to the regular service when they are older.

We had three Lenten dinners which were well attended in 2010. Adults and children remained together and explored the Easter Message. Darlene coordinated the dinners which provided excellent fellowship time.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) was conducted for 5 days in early August from 9:30 AM to Noon. The curriculum used for VBS was **Hero Headquarters**. Attendance was again amazing, with some 70 children! The children were divided into 4 age based groups. They then rotated between several stations including the lesson, snack, outdoor play, and craft. A wonderful time was had by one and all and the feedback was extremely positive. The volunteers who carried it off were incredible and a big thank you goes to Paula Wood, Sandy Haldane, Nancy Elmgren, and Darlene Gebicke who did an enormous amount of work in leading and organizing the event! An extra special thanks to the church youth who offered their time to be volunteers.

The 2010 Christmas Pageant, **“Operation Baby King”** took place on December 26, 2010. It was an excellent performance by the children of the church. It was wonderful to see the tremendous talents our children have and they made us all proud!

This year’s Teal Scholarship recipients were Megan Millard and Bronte Emery. Megan is attending graduate school at George Washington University, while Bronte is attending Salem College, NC.

The goals for 2011 include a re-evaluation and possible restructuring of the Sunday school

programs for the youth, young children and adults. The priority for the New Year will be to see how the youth group/youth Bible study can become a strong activity in the lives of our growing children, given their increasing importance in our church life. Input from parents and members towards these goals would be very valuable.

I want to thank Roy Canagarajah for seamlessly transitioning this work to me and Sandy Haldane who has continued to be heavily involved in youth Sunday school. I have been blessed by my involvement in the spiritual education of our congregation. Thanks to each and every one of you who year after year continue to commit your time, talent, and energy to the spiritual growth of our congregational family, we are witness to the results every day!

2010 Evangelism Report to the Congregation

By: Paula Wood

Thank you for inviting friends and family to join us in worship and in our programs this past year! Let's keep it up! Thank you, too, for participating in the public life of the church – VBS, AGM, the Easter egg hunt, the golf tournament, yard sale, and all of our mission activities.

This year the evangelism committee was mostly in a time of transition and prayer, yet there is much to look forward to in 2011 as we look ahead at our Transformation work and intentional evangelism as a congregation. Highlights of the 2010 year include New Hope's presence at "**Olney Community Night**," the anticipation and development of a new website set to launch early 2011, and the start of **Community Mailings** to new residents of our neighborhoods. We've also tackled changing our mindset around the "E" word through our Sunday School and Session studies of *Unbinding the Gospel*. With the help of our Session, Rev. Andrew, and all of you we look forward to welcoming new faces in our congregation in 2011!