

The Evangel
Newsletter of Community Presbyterian Church
Lake City, Colorado
Winter 2012



New Elders

We are grateful for the dedication of Lynn Hudgeons and Durell Thompson who have completed their three-year terms of office on the CPC session. Thanks to both of you for your support, hard work, and love for our church. Beginning new three-year terms are Pete Main and Helen Thompson – welcome!

Pastor's Bible Study

Our Bible Study following worship on Sunday mornings has completed a fascinating study of *The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem* by Adam Hamilton. We look forward to studying a new book of the Bible. Everyone is welcome to the Pastor's Bible Study!

Book Study

We will have a discussion of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens Wednesday evening on January 11, at 7:00 pm. Everyone is welcome!

Community Men's Prayer Breakfast

The men of Lake City continue to meet weekly on Thursday mornings. They gather for breakfast, fellowship, prayer, and informal Bible study. Representatives from all of the Lake City churches attend. Come join us at 6:30 every Thursday morning!

Worship Update

With the departure of our talented and treasured keyboardist Nancy Scott, for the winter, we have enjoyed the playing of Alan Moore and Charlotte Westmoreland. Thank you so much. We look forward to the return of Becca Compston who has also played for us in the past.

Holy Land Pilgrimage

We held an Informational Meeting for those considering travel to the Middle East in the fall or winter of 2012 on January 9 at 7:00 pm. There was a question and answer time with a travel video and a probable itinerary. It promises to be an outstanding trip. See Rick or Faye for more information.

The Season of Lent

We plan to hold an Ash Wednesday Worship Service to celebrate the beginning of the Season of Lent on February 22 at 7:00 pm. Everyone is invited.

Pastor Rick's Message

Have you ever stopped to consider if the very concept of New Year's is even plausible? I mean, look at it this way, one tick of the clock, one second, one single second, and all of a sudden, presto, change, everything is different, all things are changed, what was old is now new. Yes, I guess the old year has gone away and the new year has come. Therein, I think, lays the entire concept of probability.

When I was a child, my father began taking me to New York City with him on his business trips. As a child I would either hang in the hotel while he was gone or go with him to some of his appointments. I even had my own little briefcase stuffed with comic books. As I got older and these father-son trips continued through the many years, I began to venture out on my own onto the magical streets of New York. I would go, as the old song says so well, "east-side, west-side, all around the town." I soon discovered what I had previously imagined. New York, New York is, indeed, a city so nice they had to name it twice. It is entirely possible to travel the world and never leave the City of New York. Want to go to Israel? Go to Williamsburg in Brooklyn. Want to go to Ireland? That would be Carnasie in Brooklyn. How about Italy: well that safe bet would be Crown Heights, Bensonhurst, both in Brooklyn, or Little Italy in Manhattan. China? Easy. Chinatown in Lower Manhattan. Russia? No problem, Brighton Beach is your destination, again in Brooklyn. Harlem is a world of delights all its own with a vibrant and lively culture and innumerable places to eat and be entertained, not to mention the fascinating people you run into on the streets of Harlem. Walking the "Sidewalks of New York" is a delight: magicians, vendors, sellers, food on every corner, hot dogs, knishes, Polish or Italian sausage, and on a hot summer's day, nothing is better than Italian Ice. The list is endless.

New York is endless. Thank God.

What's the point of all this other than a travelogue for New York City? Well, this point leads to the main point. This point is that when I was able to venture out, I discovered an entirely new world that I never knew existed. Out the hotel, onto the subway, where am I going today? What will I see today? What will I experience today? What part of the new world is the old world waiting to reveal to me today? What magic will I encounter in the patter of a Three-card Monte dealer on 34th Street, the smell of hot dogs from the pushcart Broadway and 48th Street, or hear in the rumble of the subway as it speeds its way through a labyrinth of underground tunnels leading to where, who knows where? When I ventured out, I discovered that which was waiting all along, the new, the new horizon, the new dream, the new vista, the new discovery waiting to be explored, and the distant dream becoming a real reality. This is the first point: discover the world God has created that lies just outside your door. Venture away from the safe and the ordinary and discover the reality of the new, and the vitality of

discovery and exploration. Go where you have not gone. Do what has not been done. Enjoy. Remember. Ah, those were the days.

Yes, those memories of the time with my father along the sidewalks of New York are still very close to the surface. They are much a part of who and what I am. Of course, I treasure those memories and always shall. As time evolved, our trips to New York began to take on a new form. Yes, the business part of it was still alive and well. However, a new element was added.

And with this new element, the magic was added too.

That new element was Times Square New Year's Eve. A couple of weeks ago as I sat on the couch and watched the Ball drop, I cried. They were the tears of memories. The tears of years gone by. The tears of what was but was no more. The tears of reality. I missed my father. I missed my mother. I missed being on Times Square on New Year's Eve. There is no place on earth like Times Square New Year's Eve. No place. Nothing close, except possibly Trafalgar Square in London. The world comes to New York for Times Square New Year's Eve. True, there are few New Yorkers in attendance unless they are wearing a blue NYPD uniform, but the feeling is like no other. Over the years, my father and I went to New York City for his hallowed, sacred occasion we call New Year's Eve. When I got married, I convinced Faye to take on the experience. She came to love it as much as I did. When Michael came along in October, his first New Year's Eve was spent on Times Square. His wardrobe: a little Tuxedo, of course. When Meredith was added to our family, her first New Year's was on Times Square. When the Millennium passed where were we? Times Square! Over the years now, I have spent 35 of my 58 years on Times Square, New Year's Eve. For me, it remains magic and a world unparalleled anywhere. There is, as said, no other place to be. Everyone should make an appearance on Times Square at least once.

So what's the point of all this? All things are new. On Times Square New Year's Eve people from all classes, all races, all nationalities, all walks of life, all occupations come together for a night of happiness. There are no cares. The world is good and God is in God's heaven. The thrill is tangible. People meeting people they have never seen before and will never see again. People meeting people and saying "How do you do?" There is an aura of expectancy in the air. People are happy, positive, optimistic, joyful, hopeful, anticipatory. The air is clear and the world is new. The world is alive with hope and bright with promise. Here is the point: why can't we keep alive each day of the year what is experienced on Times Square New Year's Eve. Hope. Joy. Promise. Anticipation. Optimism. Ours has become a society where we not only have to tear each other down; we have to do all things possible to destroy each other. You see it in politics, in business, even in many families. Rush, rush, hurry, hurry, get, get, morals and ethics: so what who cares? Look what it has done to us as a people and as a nation. Why can't we keep the spirit of hope alive that exists every

Times Square New Year's Eve? How quickly we forget the glory, the euphoria, the hope, the possibilities, and the optimism. Is it as a friend told me: "well, Rick the reality is that it is a lot easier to destroy than to create, to tear down rather than to build up." Is this right? Is this person right? What does that say about our morals? Our ethics? Our values? What do we cherish most?

We have heard it often said, "Why can't everyday be Christmas Day?" Why can't every day be New Year's Eve when the world is bright and happy? Senator Robert F. Kennedy once said: "Some men see things as they are and say 'why'. I dream things that never were and say 'why not?'" Why indeed?

There is a dream that comes alive each year on Times Square. You can see it in the faces, you can hear it in the voices, you can feel it in the inner core of your very being. The dream is alive. The dream is of hope, of a better world. The dream is for all. The dream is to all. The dream can become a reality, but it takes work. It takes blood, sweat and tears. It takes perseverance. And most of all, it takes a burning, passionate desire to effect the dream into the reality.

This brings us to the summary. Point one: there is a world that exists beyond our front door. Go for it! Go to it! Discover it! Explore it! Become a part of it! Point two: There is also a world of hope, dreams, visions, new realities, new ways of doing and being and creating. This world is symbolized by the promise of change, the promise of hope, the tantalizing desire to be better than we were or could be. What is the connecting factor?

Jesus. All that was, all that is, all that will be comes into existence through the hands and will of God. God's will is expressed in human form in the person, the manner, the nature, and the reality of One called Jesus. Jesus is the connecting factor. It is Jesus who inspires the vision of what could be. It is Jesus who offers the call. It is Jesus who extends the summons. It is Jesus who promises to make all things new. It is Jesus who promises hope, visions, dreams, new creations, new realities, new ways of being and doing, new experiences, new possibilities. It is Jesus who takes us as we are and makes us better than we were. It is Jesus who takes us as we are and promises to make us better than we would be or, even could be by ourselves. It is Jesus who calls us to step outside our front door, to step outside our safety zone and see and encounter and live in the world around us. It is Jesus who calls us to community and not to isolation. It is Jesus who calls us to encounter, and not to turn away. It is Jesus who calls us to reach beyond ourselves into the world of our fellow human being. It is Jesus who promises a new heaven and a new earth. It is Jesus that will cause that world to come into reality in God's place and in God's time and in God's way.

This is the promise of Jesus and the hope of Times Square New Year's Eve. All things can be new. The world can be full of hope. People can come together across all human barriers and lines of race, creed, communication, and socio-economic statuses. There can be new dreams and hopes and visions (how much time does the Bible spend on dreams, hopes and visions? Answer: A great deal!) There can and there will be a newer world.

The difference is the people. There are some who act and there are some who react. There are some who desire the reality to become true. There are some who talk of the desire, but secretly like things just the way they are. There are some who want to see this new world. There are some who just talk of the new world and do nothing to make it become a reality. The promises of Jesus and the hope of Times Square New Year's Eve must be taken to heart by the people, it must become part of their life, their soul, their heart, their mind, their dreams, their hopes, their visions, and their realities. They must encompass the dream, make it theirs, and then work to put it into effect. People will not change unless they want to. Jesus will not change one unless one wants to be changed. Jesus will not break one's free will. The offer is open, the offer is to all, the challenge is for all and to all, but the response must be ours individually. When Jesus asked Peter, "Who do you say I am," Jesus was not asking a question for debate or discussion. Jesus was also not asking a communal question. The question was addressed to Peter and to Peter alone and only Peter could answer the question. There were to be no committees formed, no study papers written and no question and answer questions. The question was to an individual and only the individual named Peter could answer the question. It is the same with each one of us. You and I. No deposit, not return, no exceptions to the rule.

How far do you wish to carry the promises of Jesus and the hope of Times Square New Year's Eve? How far are you willing to go? The same questions apply to me. I do not stand outside the circle. I stand squarely inside the circle with you. There must be a desire to see the promises of Jesus and the hope of Times Square New Year's Eve blend into a reality. You have to want to change and you have to pursue the change you desire. You cannot just talk about it. Neither can you push others to it. There has to be a responsive action. The call is made: there must be a response. Jesus has made the summons: we must respond. And we will respond: one way or the other. We will either go where Jesus wants us to go and do what Jesus wants us to be, and become what Jesus desires us to be...or we will turn away and go our own way and continue to see both ourselves and the world in the way it exists.

Everything new means a change. A change in heart, mind, soul, lifestyle, and being. Many people talk about change. Many people want change. Many people do not want change. This is especially true in the Church. Many churches have closed because of their refusal to change. Many more

will do so. Nothing remains the same. All things change. The alternative is to cease to exist. However, change does not mean denial of the past. The best of the past is transferred into the present for use now. Indeed, what is past is so often present. The old can be put away. The new can come. The joy and exhilaration of a Times Square New Year's Eve can become a reality in our world. The joy and exhilaration that is offered to all by Jesus can transform lives and realities. The old can be put away. The new can come. It is the reality of the God of the past, for the present, and into the future days of our lives.

Step into God's new world. Step outside your own world. Step into the wider world. Step aside from despair. Step into the new world of new hopes, possibilities, dreams, visions, and realities. Step into the new world of hope and joy.

Times Square New Year's Eve is alive with the possibility of hope, of change, of new visions, new dreams, new realities. More importantly, much more importantly so is Jesus. With one tick of the clock, one sweep of the second hand, you can make a decision to change; you can make a decision to give your life to Christ and to begin to effect the change you desire. It will not be instantaneous. It will take time, and perseverance and effort. It will take some "doing" on your part, but the transformation can begin. The process can start. The old can become new. What was once only hoped for and seen distantly can become clearer and clearer. The fog can lift and the sun can stream in.

The offer belongs to Jesus. The response to the offer belongs to you. And to me. And to all us. The promise of seeing things not as they are, but as they should be can become reality. What is not, can be. So says Jesus.

God's blessings to all of you in 2012!