

THE COURIER

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF NHCC

NORTHWEST HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH
342 PROSPECT STREET, TORRINGTON, CT

MARCH-APRIL 2017



A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. (Luke 6:40)

¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:14-16)

Like every true church, ours is in the life-changing business. We share the gospel with those who don't know Jesus, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, men, women, boys and girls are born again. But our ministry doesn't end when people become Christians. In many ways, that's when it begins. Christ's goal for us is not just new birth, but *maturity* in him. And God has designed the church to help Christians grow. In fact, every Christian needs the fellowship and teaching of the church if he is to grow in all the ways God intends. That's the reason for everything our church does.

As you read this edition of the Courier, I hope you're encouraged to see some of the ways NHCC is helping believers become more like Jesus. Your giving and serving in this body is making an eternal difference in many lives! I also hope you're encouraged to pray for our church, for its different ministries and for all who give and serve here. And if you see a way you can help, let a leader know.

Finally, I hope you're encouraged to seek your own continued growth. Because whether you've been saved for a long time or just a little while, there's always more to learn about following Jesus. So let's encourage each other as we study, pray, evangelize and serve the Lord together!

Pastor Mike



CHRIST IN THE PASSOVER

Thursday, April 13 @ 6 PM

We're looking forward to joining as a NHCC church family in a "Christ in the Passover Seder" on April 13, Maundy Thursday, at 6:00 P.M. Part of the celebration will include a traditional Jewish Seder (with its special foods). There will also be a Potluck Supper. We'll need some help with preparing and placing the special Passover foods. If you'd like to help with the Seder, speak with Randy Smith or email him at mmercurismith@netscape.net. If you'd like to help with the potluck, speak with Pat Cianciolo or email her at atpcianciol@aol.com.



Dear Friend,

I am leaving for several weeks in the Middle East this Saturday, March 18, with a team of seven people from First Baptist Church in Garland, Texas, as well as a small team from Canada. Among them is Dr. Howard Kitchen, a urologist, who will help refugees from Iraq and Syria at the church clinic in Jordan. The Texas team will specialize in eye glasses ministry.

While we have been gone, CMG , along with our in-country partners, continues to help more than 1,000 Iraqi families who fled the terror of ISIS since June 2014 . As you know, the Jordanian government does not allow refugees to work, so these people have no possible way to support their families. Though we are a relatively small ministry, (CMG able to provide food almost to two third of these precious families and one of our partners able to cover the rest) , we manage to provide the larger families once each quarter with a \$50 food coupon. Smaller families receive a \$36 coupon, and individuals receive \$21. This is in addition to supporting six leaders who carry on the daily ministry, Plus transportations for the refugees .

My dear friend Pastor Bill will be with us once again in Gaza. As great as the physical needs are, the spiritual needs are far greater. Our brothers and sisters throughout the Middle East struggle with Christ's promises of provision and protection in the stark face of poverty and persecution. We all need reminders and encouragement and comfort, but nowhere are the ministrations of the Holy Spirit needed more than the Middle East, particularly in Gaza and Iraq.

While we are gone, please pray for safety, grace, and revelation. And please pray for Suhad and the girls as they care for themselves in my absence.

We all want to see problems solved so we can move on. That's why the Middle East presents a particularly difficult challenge. You send your generous gifts, and they are absorbed into the overwhelming and seemingly endless needs. But the problems are still there weeks, months, and years later. I can only echo Paul's encouragement to the church in Galatia: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Your gifts and prayers are keeping the flame of the gospel alive in the Middle East, in the very place to which the Bible tells us Jesus will return one day.

We recently updated our webpage with the ability to accept monthly donations. Just go to <http://www.cm2g.org/donate.php>. Or you can mail your tax deductible gift to:

**CHRISTIAN MISSION TO GAZA
255 E. SANTA CLARA STREET, SUITE 100
ARCADIA, CA 91006**

I will keep you posted with ministry report when I return.

Thank you for your prayers and your partnership and for standing with us all this time.



Since last November much has transpired with NHCC's Youth Ministry. We completed a service project, providing much needed supplies for a homeless man. Not only did our teens and several families feed this man for five months, but they also provided him with shoes, clothes, a blanket, and a backpack full of incidental items. This institutionally homeless man, named Steve, also heard the gospel many times and was given gospel literature. Please join our teens, remembering Steve in your prayers.

Since finishing a teaching series on Jesus in the Old Testament in Janaury, we have begun an in-depth series on apologetics. Fortunately, we have had the privelage of interacting with a youth who professes atheism during this series. The apologetics material has provided an occasion for many important conversations about God's existence, the historicity of Jesus, and the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. In the coming weeks, we will be tackling some sticky worldview subjects such as the Bible's teaching on marriage and sexuality/homosexuality, cults and the occult, unreached people groups, and evangelism in a culture that is hostile to the gospel.

Traditionally, the Youth Group has taken a trip during the summer. Please pray as we consider the possibility of hosting an event at NHCC.



MISSION TRIP TO HAITI

BY CINDY ALBORN

In February I went on my 8th mission trip with the iTeam to Northwest Haiti Christian Mission in St. Louis du Nord, Haiti. This year's group of 55 eye surgeons, technicians, and nurses teamed up with 12 members from the River Church from Florida to serve hundreds of people from the mission's surrounding communities. In 4 ½ days over 900 patients were seen in the eye clinic and 161 surgeries were performed (most of which were cataract). There were 2 ocularists along with us who made and repaired prosthetic eyes for patients who had lost an eye from injury or disease. Our two optometrists distributed between 250 and 300 pairs of glasses and have plans to send a few pairs of specialty order glasses to the mission for patients upon their return home.

A typical day for the team starts with 6:45am devotions and breakfast, then off to the clinic or surgery area at 7:30 for a day that generally ends at 5:30 (except for the OR which often works through the regular dinner hour). Meanwhile patients arrive at the gate each morning before the sun comes up. Many of them have left their homes hours before hoping for the opportunity to be seen by our doctors that day, but there is no guarantee of that. Late every afternoon we have to tell those still waiting to come back tomorrow and we mark their cards so that they are the first to be let into the gates the next morning. At the end of the week, sadly, we have to turn away those still at the gate telling them to come back in October for the next iTeam visit. And they will, because for most Haitians we are their only hope for treatment; they simply can't afford the cost of eye care in Haiti. In fact, most can't afford even the trip to Port au Prince where examination and surgery would be done.

While those of us doing eye care were busy, others were serving in various other ways. An ER doctor, accompanied by a group of helpers went out as a mobile medical unit to two churches in the countryside to do medical clinics. They saw 230 patients and treated a variety of minor ailments for these Haitians who came to the churches where the mobile clinics were stationed. Meanwhile at the mission, a dentist saw 42 patients for oral exams, cleaned teeth, and extracted 107 rotten teeth. Some of us traveled out to the jail and the prison in the area to take supplies and food to those imprisoned. Conditions there are not good, especially in the prison, where cells are extremely overcrowded and unsanitary. When we prayed for them it was well received. There was opportunity to go deliver meals to some elderly living in the community through the Meals on Feet feeding program. Others visited the orphaned Gran Moun (elderly unable to care for themselves), the orphaned Miriam Center children (special needs infants and children), and the ladies

actively in labor over in the delivery ward. Another group went to the market to purchase and deliver a gift of groceries and a Bible to unsuspecting families in the village or hillside.

This year's evening worship services were led by the River Church's worship team and the highlight of each evening as always was the stories of the day where people shared what they experienced and how they saw God at work through them or someone else.

Finally, two pastors from the River Church met each day with 29 Haitian pastors whose churches are associated with NWHCM to teach and encourage them in the faith so that the Gospel of Christ might go forth more earnestly from their pulpits. Many were blessed during this week and not the least were we.

Humbly submitted, Cindy



Iron Sharpens Iron GREAT time and place for younger men to take another step toward becoming part of the long term church community. They are together with the 'men of the church' and find an identity in that brotherhood. This is a big deal and we have seen how

attending ISI helps keep younger men engaged in church life.

We call this **'Building Men with Others in Mind'**. Marriages, children, grandchildren, church families, neighbors, co-workers all win when we build into men.

16 men and young men at our church had the privilege of attending this event on March 18 at the First Cathedral in Bloomfield. The keynote speakers were Dwyane Pickett and Darryl Strawberry. With over 3,000 men in attendance, we all experienced God's love and power in our lives through the ministries and faith of those who are walking in Christ. With the keynotes messages, the rockin' Praise Team and the Break-out Sessions just to name a few, it was an encouraging experience for our men that day. A special thanks goes out to Eric Beach and John Clark for providing us an incredibly great tail-gate lunch!

Randy Smith, Event coordinator





BY JENNIFER BEACH

When you hear that knock on your heart from the Lord to step out in faith, it's hard to ignore it. I remember the first time that knock happened to me at our old church. Never did I think that helping to clean closets would lead me to overseeing a Sunday School. This time around I didn't think offering to help with Preschool Praise would lead to being asked to become the Children's Ministry Leader. It's funny how God works, or is it.

Let me start by who I am and who I see myself as. I am a child of the living God, a wife and a mother. I have always wanted to be a teacher and now I am. God had called me this year to home school our kids and it's been an exciting year. I have never seen myself as a leader but jobs in my life kept pushing me into that role. All that time God prepared me for just this moment. In the past I have worked in Nursery and Sunday School. It was great to teach Sunday School again here at Northwest Hills. Now it's time for something new but familiar.

The role of a Children's Ministry Leader is not to be a boss or to take over. My role is to be a servant. It's to help in planning and organizing. I believe in praying over the ministry and being held responsible to God. I believe in working out a plan for discipleship for the children. To be a person that parents and teachers can reach out to for support and love. The leader is responsible in making sure the needs of the volunteers and families are met.

The vision for Children's ministry is a simple one to be God honoring and listen to His voice in everything we do. To help raise up the next generation of believers by working closely with the Pastor, Elders, Volunteers, and families.

Finally I ask for prayers. Please pray for the children, families and volunteers of Northwest Hills that they continue their walk with God and grow in their faith. I ask for prayers for my own family that we don't lose sight of each other as we answer God's call in our lives. I ask for prayers for myself that I continue to grow in Christ, and to lead a balanced life.



Property Team has continued to stay busy keeping our building looking beautiful! The newest edition to our property is a sign for the white house! Now people can more easily identify this house as a part of Northwest Hills Community Church and the home of Grace Place!





And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. -Act 2:42

**WEDNESDAYS AT 7:00 PM
AT DUANE & CATHY DOOT'S**

FORGOTTEN GOD
REDISCOVERING THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Today's church *admires* the gift of the Holy Spirit, but have we neglected to open it? Chan tears away the wrapping paper to uncover the source of the believing community's true power for witness and service. He issues a compelling invitation to understand, embrace, and follow the Spirit of the living God.

**A DISCUSSION OF
SUNDAY'S SERMON**

**dig
deeper**

**WEDNESDAYS AT 7:00 PM
AT DAVE AND CINDY STARR'S**

Sermon-Based Small Group

A Day of Discovery Television Production

ROMANS
The Letter That Changed the World

**FRIDAY AT 7:00 PM
AT JIMMY AND NATASHA LAWSON'S**

VOLUME 2, ROMANS 9-16

If you want to know what life is truly about - if you want to grasp the full, staggering power and beauty of Christianity - turn to the book of Romans. In *Romans: The Letter That Changed the World Volumes 1 & 2*, Day of Discovery takes you on a journey across the miles and the centuries to experience the incredible meaning and impact of Paul's letter to the Romans. Volume 1 covers Chapters 9 - 16.

WHY JOIN A GROWTH GROUP?

It is a great opportunity to be in fellowship with other believers as you study God's Word. It is in small groups that people can get close enough to know each other, to care and share, to challenge and support, to laugh and weep together, to be accountable to each other, to watch over each other and to grow together. Most importantly to pray for one another.

If you are not a part of a Growth Group consider these options and get connected.

THE REAL MEANING OF EASTER

Matthew 28:6

He is not here; he is risen, just as he said.

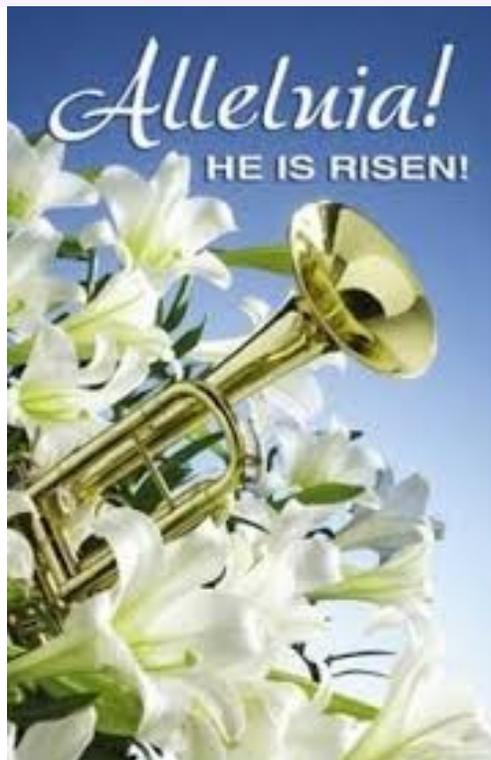
What if someone said to you, “Oh, I know all about Easter. It’s Easter baskets and chocolate bunnies and coloring eggs.” What would you say? Do you know how to talk about the real miracle of Easter? If you’re not sure what you would say, here’s some help.

The Easter story starts with God and how God created us. God gives us each value and purpose; he wants us to know him personally. But when we sin, we can’t have a personal relationship with God. What is sin? Sin is anything (thoughts, actions, words, attitudes) that turns us away from God. What is the result of sin? Sin separates us from God—eternally, which means even after we die.

Some people respond to this separation from God by denying there is a God or by doing lots of good works or by focusing on jobs or money or relationships with other people. None of these will satisfy our deepest hunger to be with God. What can we do about our sin?

Jesus is the only one who can bridge the gap between us and God. He paid the price for our sins when he died on the cross on Good Friday, but he didn’t remain dead. Jesus rose from the dead and conquered Satan and sin once and for all on Easter Sunday! So how can we have a personal relationship with Jesus? First, admit we are sinners and are separated from God by our own sins. Then believe that Jesus is our Savior—he promises to forgive our sin. Trust Jesus from now on to direct our lives to live for him, in him, and with him.

That’s the real meaning of Easter—Jesus coming to earth to be one of us and to save us! Jesus is the only meaning of Easter! This year, if someone asks you about Easter and candy, be ready to talk about Jesus! He’s the reason we celebrate!



EASTER COOKIE STORY

To be made the evening before Easter, or whenever you want to give this lesson. I've actually had to open the oven early because of a limited time frame, but over-night gives best results.

You will need:

1c. whole pecans
1 tsp. vinegar
3 egg whites
a pinch salt
1c. sugar
zipper baggie
wooden spoon
tape
Bible

1. Preheat oven to 300
2. Place pecans in zipper baggie and let children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces. **Explain that after Jesus was arrested, the Roman soldiers beat him.** Read [John 19:1-3](#).
3. Let each child smell the vinegar. Put 1 tsp. vinegar into mixing bowl. **Explain that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross he was given vinegar to drink.** Read [John 19:28-30](#).
4. Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life. **Explain that Jesus gave His life to give us life.** Read [John 10:10-11](#).
5. Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. **Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers, and the bitterness of our own sin.** Read [Luke 23:27](#).
6. So far the ingredients are not very appetizing. Add 1c. sugar. **Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us.** He wants us to know and belong to Him. Read [Ps. 34:8](#) and [John 3:16](#).
7. Beat with a mixer on high speed for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed. **Explain that the color white represents the purity in God's eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus.** Read [Isaiah. 1:18](#) and [John 3:1-3](#).
8. Fold in broken nuts. Drop by teaspoons onto wax paper covered cookie sheet. **Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid.** Read [Matt. 27:57-60](#).
9. Put the cookie sheet in the oven, close the door and turn the oven OFF. Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door. **Explain that Jesus' tomb was sealed.** Read [Matt.27:65-66](#).
10. GO TO BED! **Explain that they may feel sad to leave the cookies in the oven overnight.** Jesus' followers were in despair when the tomb was sealed. Read [John 16:20](#) and [22](#).
11. On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow! **On the first Easter Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty.**