



HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TINTON FALLS, NEW JERSERY



NOTES OF HOPE

A monthly publication to keep us informed.

December 2003

Edited & Published
by Elisabeth Buckley

Our Mission Statement

We believe that God has gathered this congregation and staff at this time and place in order to:

Introduce people to the enduring love of Jesus

Invite them to become part of his family

Instruct them in the Scriptures

Include them in the celebration of worship, and

Inspire them to serve God according to their gifts

WORSHIP WITH WINGS!

Four or five couples I know are searching for a church home. Why haven't they found one? Because what they want is very hard to find here in the Shore area. They want solid, Biblical preaching that's relevant to their lives. They want joyous, spirit-filled worship with modern music and more participation of the congregation. They want worship that's authentic and natural, not artificial and programmed. They want worship that touches their souls and connects them to God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

My friends have found some good preaching in churches with their grandparents' music and worship formality. And they've found today's music and freer worship in churches with shallow, feel-good preaching and theology. But they've found no place that establishes the connection they're looking for. Where to go?

How about Hope Presbyterian? Perhaps you have noticed some changes in our worship lately. We are moving toward a new style of music and a new level of congregational involvement to complement the best of our traditional worship elements. And we're not done yet!

I've been energized by these changes because I believe that Jesus is glorified by worship from our hearts, where music and prayer and preaching are grounded in scripture and are free to rise on the wings of the Spirit. If Hope can become the place where people can find worship that inspires and invigorates while connecting them to the Lord, ours will be an inviting church home, and I am convinced that people searching for a church will find us and stay with us.

But why now? Having celebrated one year of ministry at Hope this past September, your church leadership and I challenged Monmouth Presbytery to reconsider their previous stand and to allow me to stay on as your interim pastor. Presbytery listened and gave me their OK to stay here to guide the church toward calling a fulltime pastor and toward a lasting future.

In the past I've hesitated to initiate significant changes because I never knew whether each month or even each week would be my last. Now that we have some stability in our relationship, it's time to make our worship come alive and to make that living worship known to the people of our community and our area.

The Elders and Deacons met with me in Ocean Grove on November 9 to discuss these proposed changes and what they mean to our current life together and to our future as a church. We agreed that the future is now and that change is not optional. If we continue at our current pace of using savings to pay operating expenses, Hope must either grow or close its doors within five years at the outside. We shared a vision that Hope will become known for its vital, joyful, uplifting worship that praises the Lord in Word and song and that this identity is the key to our future. Yes, change may be intimidating, but these changes are necessary for our survival and our future as a congregation.

With the enthusiastic support and efforts of Gwynne and Carl along with the Elders and Deacons, we invite you to join in this vision to praise the Risen Lord in living worship that touches our hearts and brings honor and glory to God. And we encourage you to invite others to join us.

This Advent will mark yet another move forward as we welcome Stephen and Juli Bounds along with their two daughters from their home in Fort Wayne Indiana, where Stephen has served as Minister of Music. Stephen will guide us on the next steps of our journey toward more praise-oriented music, and he and his family will become part of our church family as they reside in the manse and spend three months with us. His enthusiasm and expertise are answers to prayer. I know we will be blessed, and I can't wait for them to arrive (second only to Gwynne!).

I'm always interested to hear what you think and feel about the changes we're making. We may try some things you love and some things you don't. I think we all can agree, however, that to do nothing and just watch our church roll toward extinction would be the worst decision of all. I want to lead Hope to a vital future filled with possibilities and praise. Let's keep talking together, praying together, and worshiping together during this time of transition. It's great to be your pastor! Praise the Lord!

Pastor David Cotton

Christian Education

A children's Advent Party for toddlers through grade 6 will be held on Saturday December 6th from 9:30 – 11:30 am. Chaperones for this event are Nancy Massa, Sue Schmardel, and Kathy Heller. Join us for breakfast, the story of Jesus' birth, carols, and Christmas crafts! Please RSVP Kathy Heller, 732-542-1283 by December 3rd.

The Church School will once again sponsor the Souper Bowl of caring collection on Sunday February 1st, 2004. The offering collected will be donated to a hunger program in our immediate area.

It is the intention of the CE committee that early next year they will set up a task force to plan for a Jr. & Sr. High youth program. It is their intention to put together a program outline so we will be ready to start the program by next fall.

The 2003 Peacemaking Offering:

This special offering was held on October 5th World Communion Sunday. We would like to thank everyone who made contributions totaling \$346.00. Twenty Five percent of the Peacemaking Offering is retained by our congregation for our support of a local peacemaking ministry. The session as yet to determine how to use our portion.

The 2003 Thanksgiving and Christmas Offerings:

Each year our local church includes in our box of envelopes several for use at special times of the year. Both the Thanksgiving and Christmas envelopes provide our members and friends an opportunity to do some second mile giving above and beyond their regular contributions to Hope Church. These gifts are very special and the funds received go directly to support the regular operating budget of our local church. We hope to receive these envelopes from you before the end of the year.

The 2003 Christmas Joy Offering:

This is the last special offering of the year sponsored by the PCUSA. This offering has been a Presbyterian tradition for almost seventy years in one form or another. The offering is one of the four special offerings designated by the general Assembly to provide congregations direct ways of supporting specific causes that help those in need.

The receipts from the offering are distributed equally to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs and to the National Ministries Division of the GA Council to support racial ethnic schools and colleges.

The date for receipt of this offering will be Sunday December 28 but it can be turned in on any Sunday in the month of December.

Stewardship & Building Fund “Honoring our Debt” for 2004:

Our fall Stewardship project got underway with Rev. Cotton speaking to the congregation on some aspects of stewardship. Later you received a special letter from Rev. Cotton concerning our faith, stewardship and it contained a stewardship commitment card for 2004. We had asked that you bring the commitment card to our special Stewardship Sunday on November 9th for the gifts to be dedicated.

If you were unable to attend you can still mail it or bring the card to church and place it in the morning worship offering plates. Please take care to understand that the regular card is a commitment only to the regular church operating fund. If you also wish to **start or to continue** a commitment to the building fund you must hand write the words building fund and the monthly amount you wish to contribute. If you misplaced your card extras are available at the visitors' center in the lobby with the added wording already on them.

Starting with January 2004 the church will provide 12 monthly envelopes for our continuing building fund mortgage needs and we will continue to use the phrase “Honoring our Debt”. Everyone will get the 12 required new envelopes including those of you who currently have the old envelopes from the current campaign. For those of you with the old blue envelopes we only ask that you throw out the ones you currently have for the months of January through June 2004 and start using the new ones that we are providing to everyone

Remember please use separate checks for the operating fund and the building fund as they are deposited in different accounts.

Advent Reflections Booklet:

This year's booklet will be ready on Sunday November 30th for you to pick up. This booklet has been written by members and friends of Hope Presbyterian Church. It contains short devotional messages, remembrances from Christmases past, recipes for the holidays and much more. There is a reading for each day during Advent.

While copies last, use this "tool" for your own Advent Outreach by taking an extra copy to give to a friend, neighbor, or colleague with an invitation for them to join you in church for one of our Christmas Eve services.

Inspiration from the Desk of Gwynne Mahns:

Inspiration was Gwynne's theme last month as two new brochures have been created.

The first brochure is entitled "Thanksgiving Graces" which include many ideas for family prayers around the table. As Gwynne states "If you forget to start the meal with a grace you can always give thanks before you leave the table".

The second brochure is "Making Room for Children in Church". This is a guide for parents and friends of children. As she states "Our church family includes families with children. The inclusion of these children in worship is of the greatest importance. We welcome children to worship by encouraging families to bring their children of all ages to the worship service. Children are an important and welcomed part of our worshiping community." The brochure is wonderful and should be read by everyone and the information used. In her conclusion "bringing children to Worship may not always be easy, but it is an essential part of their growth in Christ. We need them to be present." Remember "Children are NOT the future church. They ARE the Church."

Christmas Stockings:

The Deacons want inform everyone that we will be helping the same families as we did for Thanksgiving for Christmas. Please take a stocking from the Welcome Center. We ask that all gifts amount to \$15. If the tag inside says "GC" that means a gift certificate at a particular store. Please return your gift by December 21 wrapped and with the stocking firmly attached to it. This is so very important so we know which family should receive the gift. With all our blessings this season, let us share with those less fortunate. For questions or more information, please call Carol Fenwick, 732-531-4064.

Advent Fellowship:

A very special Advent worship service is being planed for Sunday evening December 14th at 5pm. with a cover dished dinner to follow which is sponsored by the Deacons, with them providong the desert. Judy Bigge and her clown ministry will be on hand for everyone to enjoy.

Silver Tea:

The Gleaners Christmas Silver Tea is one of the highlights of the Christmas season here at Hope. This year the tea will be after church on Sunday Dec 21st. Plan on staying after church for some of the ladies wonderful Christmas cookies.

Again an Unexpected Financial Gift Received:

During November we received an additional \$500 gift from the Korean Congregation. At our November session meeting it was decided to apply this and any other similar gifts from our Korean friends to help cover our mortgage payments.

Christmas Eve Services...Check the Time Change:

Our traditional family service is moving to a new time this year at 6:45 pm. We hope this will allow more folks time to get home from work and attend the service. The Korean's will have a service at 8:30 and a joint combined Anglo / Korean service will be held at 10:00pm. The late service will feature our traditional candle light atmosphere. Please plan on attending one or more of these services as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

New Year's Eve:

Dec. 31, 2003 New Year's Eve in a new tradition. Consider spending this special evening of bringing in the New Year with friends right here at Hope Church. The Korean congregation is sponsoring this event for both Hope congregations. The time has been set for 11:30pm to 12:30am with more details to come. Let us plan to share the beginning of this New Year with old and new friends!

Annual Meeting October 26, 2003

The October annual meeting is set aside for the election of our church officers for the next and subsequent years. This year the following were elected.

Elders for the session: Kelly Colao was elected to her second three year term, Laura Kelsey was elected to her first three year term, and Louis Eckert and Edward Kelsey were elected to their first two year terms.

Deacons for the board: Karen Schwartz, Rob Weiss, Tammy Weiss and Andrea Witter were elected to their first three year term, John Waldron IV was elected to his first one year term, and Joe Massa was elected as a youth deacon for a one year term.

We would like to welcome Gail McDonald to a one year term as our new General Funds and Designated funds treasurer. After many years of dedicated service as treasurer, Elder Phyllis Trask asked that her position be open to someone else. Phyllis did such a wonderful job and she will be greatly missed. Marilyn Gifford was again elected to a one year term as our receipts treasurer.

Journey to Bethlehem:

Our congregation has been invited to a "Journey to Bethlehem a Christmas Drive-Through" with living scenes including animals viewed from within the convenience of your own car. This event is Friday, Saturday or Sunday December 5-7, 2003 from 6:30 – 9:30 pm on the grounds of Old Tennent Presbyterian Church on Tennent Road between Rt. 522 & Craig Rd. Manalapan, NJ. This event is sponsored by the church and St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church. For more info call 732-446-6299.

Annual Meeting January 25, 2004

At this meeting all reports for what has occurred during 2003 here at Hope Presbyterian Church are presented. For our newer members and friends on the preceding Sunday, the 18th, the report booklets will be distributed so you can have a week to read them over. In addition the budget for 2004 will be presented. All committee chairs, treasures and staff are requested to have submitted their reports no later than January 11th. I know this appears to be early but the way the calendar is this year we lose one full week to prepare the booklet.

New Lunchtime Bible Study:

A new lunchtime discussion group recently began meeting on Tuesday's at 11:00 am. The group is open to all. Discussion for the first few weeks will be centered on a video by Philip Vancey based on his best selling book, "The Bible Jesus Read." Plan now to bring a brown bag lunch and join the group. No meetings on December 23rd and 30th.

Thanksgiving Service - When We Gather Together:

Our Thanksgiving service was held on Sunday evening November 23rd at 7 pm. with Rev. Yang providing the pastoral prayer along with the congregation of the AME Zion Church of Eatontown, their wonderful youth choir and their pastor Rev. Harrigan who preached a great sermon. The youth choir was a big hit. There was a wonderful fellowship time following the service. If you were not there you missed a great service as we thanked God for all we have been given.

Do You Enjoy the Music of Carl Fritche?

We've all enjoyed Carl's music on different occasions in the Church. If you would like the opportunity to hear his music at home or in the car, you may purchase a CD of his original songs. All funds from the sale of these CD's go the Building Fund. If you would like to purchase a CD or need more information, please see Carl. These CD's would make a great gift for Christmas.

"Behind Enemy Lines" By Gwynne Bounds

Have you read Gwynne's book yet? It is an account of her exploits, working for the Lord behind the Iron Curtin during the Cold War. Several copies are on the Gleaners table downstairs. Pick up a copy and make a donation to the kitchen fund.

Newsletter:

We want to better inform our members and friends of the activities of the various organizations of the church. Committee Chairs of the church please let us hear from you because much of the success of this undertaking depends upon you. So write an article, or just give us the facts and we will write it for you! The January 2004 "Notes of Hope" deadline for articles is Sunday December 21st hand written or via email to esbuckley@monmouth.com.