



HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TINTON FALLS, NEW JERSERY



NOTES OF HOPE

A monthly publication to keep us informed.

December 2006

Edited & Published
by The Buckley
Family

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 wor-
ship, and

Inspire them to
serve God according
to their gifts



Dear Family and Friends of Hope,

As we enter this advent season, allow me to share with you a couple of thoughts that have been mulling around in my head as I have been reflecting on the coming of Christ, and the meaning of Christmas. As I have been reading the first two chapters in Luke in preparation for the sermons for Advent, it strikes me that, surprisingly, we really are not that different from those who lived in Jesus' time.

By this I mean that, like the people at the inn in Bethlehem, we often have a hard time making "room" for Christ in our lives. Today's Christmas season tends to be defined by hustle and bustle, hurry and worry, visiting and vacationing, decorating the house and discount shopping. From "black Friday" to Christmas morning, between sending Christmas cards and wrapping presents, there very rarely is any time to stop and make space in our lives to reflect on the significance of Christ's coming.

And it's no wonder. After all, the events and ideas surrounding the incarnation seem so very distant and far removed from the "modern world" we live in. Amidst the many pressures of the season (family, financial, calendar), it can be hard to stop and hear the quiet knocking at the door of our hearts of one who is in need and asking for a room to stay in. And even if we do answer the door, just like the innkeeper in Bethlehem, it can be that much harder to actually take time from our busyness, and make the effort to create space for him.

Our modern lives demand so much, and seem so distant from the time of Jesus. And yet I like what Dorothy Day reminds us of, "It is no use saying that we are born too late to give room to Christ..."

"Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts. But now it is with the voice of our contemporaries that he speaks; with the eyes of store clerks, factory workers, and children that he gazes; with the hands of office workers, slum dwellers, and suburban

Pastor's Column continued

This is why I was so proud of Hope a couple of weeks ago when we took the time to dedicate all those shawls, and all those Thanksgiving food baskets of food, and those 76 Christmas boxes to give to children in need. And I was even more proud when we then took the time to deliver them in person. The generosity of our congregation, in these very real and concrete ways, is a reflection of Jesus to the World.

In this season of Advent, as we wait with expectancy for the coming of our Lord, may we continue to have eyes to see the little ways that he comes to us everyday – most especially in the form of those around us who are in need. And may we have the courage to take time to make room for them in our lives.

Grace and Peace to you this Holiday season.
In Christ,
Andrew

76 !

Yes, that's the number of boxes Hope Church members and friends generously donated for Operation Christmas Child on November 19. It took all of the church school kids to collect the boxes using wagons and a push cart. They then checked them over for labels, added rubber bands where needed, counted them up and loaded two cars. Thanks, kids!

Thanks, too, to the McGuire family for their transportation help, the Schwartz family for supplying plastic boxes, and the Chadwicks for the giant rubber bands. Isn't participating in this mission project a wonderful way to share the love of Jesus Christ? Please continue to keep those who prepare the boxes for shipping, the Samaritan's Purse workers who deliver them, and the children who receive the boxes, in your prayers. Thank you all for such a successful outpouring of love through this project, putting faith into action.

!!!Important Notice Regarding December Activities !!!

The December 10th Family Advent Service/Pot Luck Dinner has been cancelled.

(but there are plenty of other fellowship opportunities for you to take advantage of!)

Stewardship Campaign Update

Thank you very much to those of you that have already brought or sent in your 2007 Pledge Cards. For those of you who forgot, or need more time, please try to get the cards in a.s.a.p., so that we can make our program plans for next year. There is excitement in the air here at Hope Church but we need a unified effort to raise our contribution levels to support the many fine programs planned. "Keep those cards and letters coming". Thanks again, John Schwartz, Stewardship Chairman

December Calendar Highlights

Pastor Andrew is being ordained & Installed!! Sunday December 3rd at 5pm. All are invited to attend this very special service and celebration as Andrew is ordained as a minister & installed as the pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church. Please come to show your love and support. A reception will follow the service in the John Calvin Room.

Christmas Eve Services: Sunday December 24
9:30 AM Worship – celebrating the 4th Sunday of Advent;
7pm Candlelight Family Worship with Communion.
Please join us as we celebrate Jesus' birth!

“Dinner and a DVD” is Back

Take a break from the commercial December rush we all get caught up in, and join us on Wednesday, December 13th for a royal feast of Mediterranean origin as we view the Day of Discovery DVD, “The Two Kings: Jesus and Herod.”

Journey with the narrators to the Holy Land, where the stories of Jesus and Herod intersect. See the contrasts in the lives of two kings and their kingdoms. Learn about the reign of Herod the Great, and the role of the Magi.

As with previous Day of Discovery offerings, the commentary is presented in an interesting manner with the Biblical citations, and the views of actual Holy Land locations are starkly beautiful. Take this opportunity to examine the less familiar parts of the story of Jesus' birth.

We'll begin with appetizers at 6 PM, view the 30 minute film at 6:30, and then gather for dinner, fellowship, and informal discussion as we sample various examples of Mediterranean cuisine. Please sign up in the narthex or email Kathy Heller (kathylou4@comcast.net), so we can plan for the dinner. If you have recipes to suggest or could help with meal preparation, we welcome your assistance.

Gleaners' News

This year, why not send a beautiful Hope Church Christmas Card to your family and friends? The Gleaner Ladies are selling Christmas Cards that Joanne Cotton took last year of the beautiful display of poinsettias in our Sanctuary. The cards show the Cross, the Communion Table and the beautiful plants that arrayed the Chancel area. Each card is blank inside for your own personal message. The cost is \$5.00 for 5 cards with envelopes. See Dorothy Van Pelt, Margot Eble or Marilyn Gifford for purchase.

NEW PASTOR HAPPENINGS

Have you ever thought about how a pastor becomes a pastor? Aside, of course, from the obvious 3 years of study in seminary. That's post-graduate study, so when a person is graduated from seminary, they have earned an MDiv (Masters of Divinity) degree. But what about after that?

In the Presbyterian Church, a person has to have received a "call" in order to be ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament after earning their Mdiv degree. A "call" is when a particular church extends an offer of employment to a person, and the person agrees to come and work at that church.

But there are some steps between receiving a call, and actually being installed as the pastor of a particular church. The candidate and the search committee must both meet with the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery, to be questioned — mostly about theology and finances. If the candidate is approved by the COM to pursue a call from a church within its Presbytery, the next step is for the candidate to be approved by a vote of the congregation offering the call. The candidate next appears before the entire Presbytery of Monmouth, which is comprised of all of its ministers from the various churches and lay delegates, at a regularly scheduled meeting, to be examined as to his faith, his relationship with Jesus Christ, and his theological beliefs. The entire Presbytery must vote, then, on whether to accept the person into membership of the Presbytery, enabling the person to minister at a local church within the bounds of that Presbytery.

This is where we are at in the process!

On **Tuesday evening, November 28th**, Pastor Andrew will appear before Presbytery to be questioned. The meeting will be **at the Belmar Presbyterian Church** (very close to us!), starting at **7PM. The meeting is open, and we encourage everyone to attend.** If you don't want to drive there alone, or perhaps can't drive at night, let any Elder know of your desire to attend. We can set up car pooling, and we will make sure that you get a ride! Let's all plan to attend and support Andrew with our prayers and presence.

After approval by the Presbytery, the next step is the culmination of years of hard work and study and prayer. **Andrew's Ordination into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament and Installation as Pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church will take place at the church on December 3rd, Sunday, at 5PM. What a glorious event!**

This is a special worship service, with two components: ordination and installation. **Everyone is welcome at this special worship service, also!** A pastor is ordained only once (just as our Elders and Deacons are ordained only once), and we get to be there for Andrew's special event! And — we plan to have a super party to celebrate afterwards — downstairs in the John Calvin Room. Let's all plan to attend Sunday evening, and show Andrew and Robyn how very thankful we are for them and their decision to minister among the people of Hope!

Decking Our Halls and Walls

The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee invites you to help us beautify the sanctuary again this year by dedicating or honoring someone with a Poinsettia! The plants may be purchased for \$10.00 and \$15.00. Green ordering forms are available each week in the Sunday bulletin and may be returned, together with your check for payment made out to Hope Presbyterian Church, to Cyndie Van Bavel no later than December 10th.

Saturday, December 2nd at 2pm - Family Advent Wreath Making & Church Decorating

Party: We invite you to participate in a special family event to make your own Advent Wreath. In the past, the children have enjoyed helping to light a candle on our church wreath each week during Advent. Why not make one for home to light each day to remind us of this holy time of year? **Space is limited.** We only have room for up to 50 people. A sign up sheet is available in the Narthex. Sign ups will close November 26th or when space is filled.

The committee is providing 10” Styrofoam wreaths, hooks for decorations, and candle holders only. Included will also be a Family Advent Book including activities and readings for each day of Advent. **Families will be responsible for their own greens (either real or artificial), decorations, and candles.** Some limited real greens will be donated. Come prepared either to get creative, or keep it real simple. Your choice!

On the same day, and in addition to the wreath making that afternoon, **we’re inviting you to come and decorate the church sanctuary and the Christmas Tree for the holiday season.** Invite family and friends to join you! Please come and get into the spirit and make the Sanctuary sparkle for the holidays! The tree will be up and will need decorating as well as putting up some banners for Advent. We will have a special dedication of the wreaths and of the tree at about 4 PM.

Refreshments will be served. Seasonal music will be playing on the stereo for you to sing along to. So please come and enjoy some family fellowship.

The Family Advent Activity and Devotion Book will be available on the church website at www.hopepresbyterian.com. A limited number will be available at the Welcome Desk.

Update from your Mission/Outreach Committee:

Twelve prayer shawls were finished this week. They were dedicated during the November 19th Worship Service by Pastor Tibert. This group of shawls will be taken, together with notes of encouragement assuring the recipients of our prayers, to the Geraldine Thompson County Nursing Home Facility in the Allenwood section of Wall Township.

The Mitten Tree was set up on November 16th and will be in the Narthex until December 3rd. Please help to decorate it with a pair of new children’s mittens. They will be given to the Salvation Army in Asbury Park again this year.

The Clerk's Communiqué

(Notes from the Session Minutes)

- **Administration:** A new church directory is being prepared for publication in the New Year. If you know of corrections that need to be made since our April 2006 version, please submit them to Gwynne Mahns.
- **Denominational Mission Budget:** The session approved a motion that our 2007 denominational mission budget be set at \$2,000.00. Half of that sum will be designated for Camp Johnsonburg and the rest for the general mission work of the Presbytery.
- **Local Missions:** The Mission/Outreach Committee will again be sending \$100.00 donations to support the work of ARC, The Parker Family Clinic, Inter Faith Neighbors and Coastal Habitat for Humanity.
- **Membership:** As of November 21, 2006 we have 117 active members with many new friends, who are not yet members, attending and taking part in our services regularly.
- **Music Ministry:** New members have been added to the Choir, the Bell Choir and the Praise Team recently. There's an open invitation for members of the congregation who are musically inclined to consider joining any or all of these groups.
- **Nominating Committee:** Thanksgiving was offered that all open positions for church officers have been filled.
- **Property:** Two dumpsters are sitting outside the manse and a large clean-up project is underway to remove unwanted and unusable items from the manse basement, the garage, the fenced-in dumpster area, and the shed. Many smaller projects, mostly at the house, will be accomplished in the next couple of months. In December, the gutters of the church and the manse will be cleaned out.
- **Stewardship:** Only about 50% of the expected Pledge Cards have been turned in so far. Extra cards are available from the Clerk for those who have misplaced theirs. The important point was made that everyone needs to be reminded of the fiscal fact that, because we now have a full-time pastor, the additional annual cost to us is approximately \$23,000.00. All congregants, - Elders, Deacons, members and friends of Hope, - are being asked to increase their giving so that our mission and ministry opportunities can be all that God calls them to be.

Hope Church 2006 Christmas Card Display

Again this Christmas season the Deacons are asking members and friends of Hope Church to bring a Christmas card to the church to be displayed in the narthex for the holiday season. This will be done in lieu of our sending Christmas cards to others in the Hope Church community this year. Please bring your card to the church anytime between November 26th and December 24th.

The Deacons will then accept donations associated with Christmas card and postage savings, and these donations will be presented to Love INC. Your donation can be placed in the offering plate, and checks should be payable to Hope Church with a notation of "Love INC". Thanks in advance for your participation and support of Love INC during the holiday season.

From the Deacons

Thanks' again to the generous and loving congregation of Hope. All of the food items that you donated were packaged and delivered to our families in need and prayerfully, they will have a joyous Thanksgiving meal. The Lord's hand continues to provide. This year a business on Industrial Way also collected food and gave us a call, to see if they could 'join forces' with us. We have been able to add three more families from Love, Inc. and provide for one more church family from Hope. We do have much to be thankful for.

Our eyes are again focused on the white 'giving tree' in the Narthex. This time it is festively decorated with green stockings. Each stocking represents a gift for the children of all of our families. Our goal is to give each child one gift and one gift certificate (each item with the target cost of \$20.) this Christmas. We ask that you again open your hearts and take a stocking or two. We plan to partner gift giving with the generous folks on Industrial Way. Together we will be able to help make this Christmas holiday a joyous one for even more children than we did last year. Please return your gifts, wrapped and with the green stocking attached, on December 17.

For the adults.... There are still Hope Cookbooks available!!! What a wonderful Christmas gift

Meet New Members

Ellen Dingman divides her year between Eatontown and Arizona, since she has family in both places (5 children, 15 grandchildren), as well as in England. While in our area, she stays with John and Karen Schwartz. It was Karen, her friend of 28 years, who first brought her to Hope. Karen told her, "You have to try this church!" Ellen had taught Sunday school for five years in Arizona until a new superintendent told her she was "too spiritual". She likes the way children are included in Hope's services and says that "everyone is so friendly." She finds Hope spiritual without being "over the top." Without the Lord, Ellen says, she could not function.

Marianne Valerio lives in Neptune with her husband Jim. They have three sons, a daughter, and five grandchildren. Marianne is the Continuing Education Coordinator at Jersey Shore Medical Center. She met Rev. Cotton at the hospital, and it was through him that she first came to Hope. But even before then, she had driven by and loved the 'little church in the woods'. Marianne says that the people at Hope "have been wonderful" and she is very impressed with our new pastor. She brings her grandsons to church with her and they love Sunday School.