



HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TINTON FALLS, NEW JERSERY



NOTES OF HOPE

A monthly publication to keep us informed.

February 2007

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 found in
the Gospel of Jesus
Christ

Invite them to
become part of the
family of God

Instruct them in
the Scriptures, God's
word to us

Involve them in
the ministry of the
church, according to
their gifts

Inspire them to
go into the world,
making disciples of
others



From the Pastor ...

Wow! What a weekend we had.

I have to confess that going into the session retreat I didn't know what to expect... after all, it was the first time I had led a session retreat, and the first time we had done something like this. I knew that some of the elders were feeling a little wary as well. Early on we had asked the question do we really even need to spend the night somewhere. But I knew that we needed to get away and just be together for an extended period of time. More can happen relationally in a weekend like this, then can happen in 6 months of session meetings. And I have to say that this really was true for us.

Sure, we accomplished quite a bit. Friday night we spent time building relationships, worshiping together and studying the bible, sharing some of our stories with each other in small groups, and praying together. Saturday morning we talked about the expectations involved in being a elder, and our philosophy of what ministry should look like. And in the afternoon we spent the bulk of our time forming a vision for this next year.

But I have to say that the most exciting stuff happened relationally, in the down times; while brewing coffee for breakfast, in conversations over snacks or lunch, in spontaneous walks around the neighborhood. It was the experience of growing closer to one another, sharing and spending time with each other, that truly made the retreat worthwhile. As a result, we left the weekend with a greater sense that we were a team, and with a renewed sense of purpose going forward. That is what was exciting for me.

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From the Pastor Continued

Now, again, I have to confess that it is not all sugar and spice. As a session we are very aware that Hope Church has some challenges ahead (especially with Gwynne leaving, and our financial situation). We are going to need your support and prayers as we navigate this next year. But we believe that God has brought us together as a leadership team for exactly this time and exactly this ministry. And we believe that he has been faithful in guiding us up until this point... and will remain faithful to us throughout this next season together. My prayer is that Hope Church and its leadership will continue to be attentive to God's promptings in our lives and ministry, and that we would continue to commit ourselves to stepping out in faith, trusting that God will provide.

May the Grace of our Lord be with you,
Andrew

Retreat Reflections from the Christian Education Committee

Glancing around the table at our January 16 Session Meeting, it occurred to me that I actually wanted to go away and brainstorm, pray, and worship with this group of folks who I knew were committed to ministry in the name of Jesus Christ. Our retreat did indeed offer a pivotal opportunity to learn more about Andrew's vision for Hope Presbyterian Church, to refocus as a Session on what our priorities should be, and to get to know Michelle and Ceil, our new elders, even better. In addition, through Bible Study, we each had the opportunity to look within ourselves, assessing our own attitudes and behaviors in preparation for leadership.

The word that most encapsulates my experience in Ocean Grove is STEWARDSHIP, in the most profound sense of the word. How can we be the wisest stewards of our resources: the time, talent, and treasure of our congregation... to spread the Good News not only locally, but globally? How can we make the best use of our church building and property for ministry now and in the future? Do we glorify God in the choices we are making?

As chairperson of the Christian Education Committee, overseeing children's, youth, and adult education, one of my priorities will be the happy task of preparing for an additional church school class in the fall, to determine where the class will meet and who will teach it. Our Youth Group needs to be reactivated, and a Task Force will be organized shortly to suggest activities and determine a leadership structure. In terms of Adult Education, we would like to once again offer more Bible Studies, perhaps of 6 - 8 weeks duration, with babysitting where possible. To effect these changes, input and help would be welcomed from the congregation, so that we can implement programs that would benefit all of us, from toddlers through senior citizens, on our faith journeys.

Kathy Heller

After 45 years of full-time Christian Ministry, it's time to retire ...

At our staff meeting on January 2nd, I told Pastor Andrew that, after prayer and waiting on the Lord, I've decided that the time has come for me to retire from Hope.

Coming to this decision was not easy, not least of all because I absolutely LOVE my work here. However, I'm convinced that my moving on will be the best thing for Pastor Andrew and for the church.

Let me try to explain: for some time now I've felt that I've reached the end of what I can do to help move the ministry forward at Hope. I also feel that Andrew needs someone else with newer, creative ideas to work with him in taking Hope to the next level. This in NO WAY means that he and I are having difficulty working together. ***Nothing could be farther from the truth.*** I love this young man, and believe with all my heart that he is God's chosen servant for this church.

When I began to feel the Lord nudging me towards retiring from my responsibilities at the church, I have to admit that I went through a phase of worrying a bit about the future. Actually, that was the second of three distinct, emotional phases. The ***first*** included times of doubt and a reluctance to leaving such a good thing behind; in ***the second*** phase, I experienced a certain amount of fear as I contemplated the unknown future; but ***the third*** overwhelming emotion was a peace that this is His will and therefore everything will be fine because our loving heavenly Father only wants the best for all of us.

Unless my replacement can be found sooner, we've set May 27th, 2007 – Pentecost Sunday – as my last Sunday at Hope. Let me assure you that I am not leaving Hope to take up employment elsewhere. What happens in my life after May 27 is totally in God's hands – but I can't help hoping that an initial rest period will be part of that plan!

Lovingly in the Lord,
Gwynne Mahns

From the Mission/Outreach Committee

In each successive year, the mission/outreach committee has added several new projects involving local mission work which has helped us to grow as disciples of Jesus by reaching out to others. Just as the disciples learned from Jesus, so have we in turn learned from their example. We are spiritually warmed by being able to help those less fortunate than ourselves. This is how we grow in discipleship, by learning to love and care for each other.

This coming year, we feel that God is leading us towards new and exciting paths. We know that God guides us in our work, helping us to acknowledge the fact that we are ready for the next chapter in our mission work. Our work helps us to testify to the Gospel of Jesus' good works with humility, and, following His words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive".

Marilyn Hicken

Reflections from the Nominating Committee

A retreat in Ocean Grove, I was ready to go! From the third floor of the Grove Hall retreat center we had a birds eye view of the Great Auditorium next door and the summer tent cottage area.

We examined the responsibilities of elders, deacons and each of the session committees.

My responsibility is to chair the Nominating Committee. We have plans to review the expectations and responsibilities of leadership for potential elders & deacons. Next we will conduct a search for potential candidates. Appointments will then be set up to interview potential candidates hearing their faith story, their spiritual gifts and how they might serve the church in leadership. The committee will prayerfully consider who should be asked.

Please keep your church leadership in your prayers as Hope serves our Lord.

Jean Buckley

From the Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee met on February 7 to define its work for the year. We are preparing a set of goals and objects to address all of our personnel and administration responsibilities. In particular, the committee discussed Gwynne's decision to retire in May. We are evaluating the current job descriptions, inputs from session members, and Rev. Tibert's vision to create new momentum and opportunities for volunteer service in our church. This is a great chance to consider how our loss might be turned into an opportunity to expand the church ministry. We plan to look within the church community for talent that we might be able to use in either paid or volunteer capacities. We also plan to look outside the church for talent that might expand and enrich the ministry here at Hope. The congregation's thoughts on this are very welcome. Please contact any of the committee members to share any ideas or concerns you may have. The members are: Rob Weiss, Susan Penrose, Marilyn Hicken, Rev. Tibert, and Gail McDonald (chair).

Reminder from the Gleaners

February is the love month. And for the Gleaners, it is a loving and lovely time for all of us to encourage each other to count our blessings. Our February fund-raising calendar gives you reminders every day of things to be thankful for. What? You don't think having ten windows in your home that need frequent cleaning inside and outside is something to be thankful for ... especially when we ask you to donate a few cents for each window??? How would you like to live in a window-less dwelling?

Please be generous in your February love offering to the Gleaners. Your gifts help us to support many ministries at Hope Church. Thank you.

Reflections from the Membership & Congregational Care Committee

Having been on Session for more years than I like to think about, I try to go into something like the Session retreat with realistic expectations. I hoped it would be productive, but I was also careful not to get my hopes too high. Given that, I was happy to see how productive the weekend was. It afforded me an opportunity to become better acquainted with some of the newer elders and elders-to-be. This is a group of committed Christians who have the best interests of the church at heart. There seems to be a refreshing lack of personal agenda.

The most surprising development of the retreat was the unanimity of opinion about where we should be focused for the next year. When we see how successfully the plans for 2007 are implemented, we will have a truer measure of the success of the retreat. I believe that, with the Lord's guidance, great things are in store for Hope Church!

Dave Harris

Reflections from the Stewardship Committee

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the session retreat so consequently, missed out on a good time of fun, fellowship, vision casting, and planning for future ministry.

Apparently, "*stewardship*" was the retreat buzz word – not just the monetary meaning of the word, but also the deeper implications that involve using our gifts, talents, time and energies in every aspect of the Lord's work at Hope. Each session member/committee chair was encouraged to consider their own stewardship responsibilities in all of these areas.

Because of my position as chair of the stewardship committee, it's perhaps understandable that I'm more concerned about how we're going to fund all the exciting things we would like to attempt for God this year. At our most recent meeting of the stewardship and finance team, suggestions were made that have great potential. Our team is eager to move ahead, but we're going to need the full support of our congregation. In 2007 we're determined to do a better job of keeping our church family informed of our needs as they relate to funding ministries, paying salaries and utilities, maintenance of equipment and property, etc. And we have no hesitation asking you to be supportive and ***just as determined*** to play your part. If you haven't done so yet, please let us have your promise of support by filling out a pledge form. There are extra copies available on the information table on the lower level. You and I – all of us together – are the only ones who can keep Hope Church moving forward. That's the bottom line.

John Schwarz

Message from our Disbursements Treasurer

What is a Disbursements Treasurer you ask? As I've grown to learn over the past month or so, it's not just about paying the bills. It involves much more than one realizes. Without going into all the financial aspects, I'd rather tell you what God has called me to do this year as your disbursements treasurer.

Upon taking over from Gail McDonald starting January 1, I started praying about how this ministry could lead to better stewardship within this church and kept asking God what it is that I could do to make a difference in this ministry. Remarkably at our session retreat, most, if not all of us, realized our mission this year for Hope is to focus on Stewardship. Remember, Stewardship isn't all about money. Importantly, it's about time, treasure and our talents all rolled into one big package that benefits the community and our church. After much prayer and soul searching, I came to realize that my experience of being involved in the finance industry over the course of several years and my business degree will help to set Hope in the right direction financially.

My goal this year is to work with the Stewardship & Finance Committee to help develop a workable budget and to offer some sound business advice. Yes, this church is a business; it's God's business. This committee plans on making some big decisions and changes this year, but we can't do it without the love, prayers and good stewardship of this congregation. Please be in prayer this year as to what it is that you can do to be better Stewards and to cause God joy. I welcome this challenge wholeheartedly and most importantly, prayerfully.

Cyndie Van Bavel

Reflections on the Retreat from a Newcomer to Session

When I got the call from Jean asking me to consider being an elder, my initial reaction was one of surprise. A litany of excuses ran through my head, but as I sat and reflected, I felt that if God brought me to it He would lead me through it. With that in mind I accepted and so was able to participate in the weekend retreat. I packed my bags with excitement and a little anxiety. The weekend proved to be a beautiful time filled with thoughtful prayer, wonderful conversation and a supportive comradery. Many of the questions I had about my role in the church were answered and my feelings of nervousness quelled. Everyone understood that as a newcomer I had serious doubts about my ability to play an important role in the church. The support I received, not to mention the hug from Steven Buckley, left a lasting impression on me. I left the retreat feeling a renewed enthusiasm and confidence as we move ahead as a congregation in the capable hands of our Pastor, Andrew.

Michelle Mullan



You're Invited!!

Hello Ladies!

You're invited to a pearl party!

TO BENEFIT THE MARY MORAN MEMORIAL CHIME CHOIR FUND

When: Saturday, February 24, 2007

Time: 2 - 5 pm in the John Calvin Room

Where: Hope Presbyterian Church

1189 Hope Road

Tinton Falls, NJ 07724

Please RSVP by February 22 to: Cyndie Van Bavel at **732-776-8503**

or cyndie.vanbavel@verizon.net

What's a Pearl Party? At Vantel, they import their own pearl oysters, which are grown exclusively for pearls, from the South Pacific, an area renowned for the most valuable pearls in the world. Since Vantel directly imports the pearl oysters in huge quantities, they are able to keep their pearl prices very low. They can pass that savings on to you!

At a Vantel Pearl Party, we bring real oysters to you. You pick the one you want. We open it right in front of your eyes. Then we measure your pearl and appraise it based on size, color and luster. A white, cream, pink, gold, blue or even a rare black pearl is waiting for you!



Your Vantel Pearl demonstrator, Alexa Coy will show you a wide selection of exquisite pearl jewelry settings. Each setting is uniquely designed to highlight your pearl's natural beauty and luster. If you would like to order a pearl setting for your pearl, we do the mounting work for free.

February is sale month. Each oyster is only \$6.95. (regularly \$8.95).

You may visit www.vantelpearls.com to get additional information.

Prizes will be given away and refreshments will be served.

Can't come to the party? Order forms and brochures are available. Just ask us to pick an oyster for you!

Hope to see you there!

Retreat Overview and Pages from the Clerk's Notes

Perhaps the most exciting part of the retreat for the elders was the brainstorming and prayer that took place in the afternoon. Initially the sessions was asked to review the mission statement of the church (what we call the 5 I's) to discern if they are still relevant to where we are at. While maintaining the basic formula, we ended up changing some of the specific language...

INTRODUCE people to the enduring love of God found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

INVITE them to become part of the family of God

INSTRUCT them in the scriptures, God's word to us

INVOLVE them in the ministry of the church, according to their gifts

INSPIRE them to go into the world, making disciples of others.

We urge you to memorize and use the 5 I's of our Mission Statement. The rational is to bring people full circle through a process that will then prepare them to introduce others to God's love.

Then what followed was a brainstorming session that looked at some future issues that we may have to address as a church. Among the issues discussed were...

Issues Facing Hope Presbyterian Church in 2007

Manse

Security, Central Air Conditioning, Interior Paint

Youth & Young Adults More use of the youth of the church, The church Adopt a Hwy Way, Manse Clean Up Outreach / connections – Parents Night Out

Christian Education Worship Space, Bible Studies, Youth Group(s)

Stewardship / Finances Funding – Fundraisers, Education of Congregation on Stewardship Issues, Mortgage ,Financial Stability Grants

Personnel Gwynne's leaving

Membership Growth ,Meeting Community Needs, So they came, Community Days

Worship Moment for Missions during the Worship service,Two Services Ushers – aware of seating needs, Ushers coming at 9:00 am

Property Lot 11.1Repaving the parking lot

Mission Global Outreach

CommunicationWithin our Congregation Within our Committees

At this point, following a break, we gathered together in prayer and journaling. During this time we focused on asking God to guide us in discerning what we as a congregation were being called to focus on in the upcoming year. As each of us began sharing what we felt God was calling us to, it quickly became apparent that the dominant focus was becoming the theme of Stewardship. In fact, almost every single one of us shared something that was related to that theme. This was truly an exciting moment... to see how God could speak so clearly to the group through each of its individuals. What is more, God even guided our discussion to a passage from scripture, which has become our inspiration for this coming year in ministry.

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10)

With Stewardship as our ministry focus for this year, everyone was asked to come up with one or two ways in which they could emphasize stewardship in their perspective ministries. The following goals were listed:

Stewardship of our property by its upkeep and its expansion

Worship - more congregational involvement in the worship service

Mission - visible public presence – Soup Kitchens

Stewardship / Finance - budget, “Mortgage”, Investment Management, Fundraising

Clerk - mentoring an assistant clerk from a younger church member

Property - Facility Use; manse usage, perhaps the basement

Personnel - Gwynne's leaving

Pastor Andrew - Stewardship sermon series

Christian Education - Expansion of Adult Bible Study

Membership - New Membership Classes; Stewardship presented in the class using the 3 T's (time, treasure, talents) so people can serve

Nominating - list expectations to potential new Leaders

It is the hope of the leadership that God would grow the congregation in its understanding of Stewardship in this upcoming year.