



HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TINTON FALLS, NEW JERSERY



NOTES OF HOPE

A monthly publication to keep us informed.

May 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



THE PASTOR'S COLUMN

Dear Members and Friends of Hope,

Recently I had the privilege of hearing one of our Deacons, Nancy Massa, share some of the life-lessons God taught her while she participated in the DPNC's search for a new Pastor. I was so encouraged by her experiences, that I've invited her to share them with you in this newsletter. I hope you are as blessed by Nancy's words as I was...

It's Time for Another Real-Life Spiritual Lesson for Nancy

Devotions at the Deacons' Meeting, April 2007

Although effort and dedication and love for the Lord have been a part of my life, it was brought to my attention that I was in need of a spiritual lesson. Just as Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." I think I was in a child-like spiritual mindset when it came to understanding the Greatest Commandment, and our Heavenly Father provided a real-life lesson for me. In Matthew 22:37-38, Jesus replied to the question by the Pharisees, 'which is the greatest commandment in the Law?', "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."

As Andrew has brought to our attention, our interpretation of the reading of Scripture brings with it our own life experiences and perceptions. Now I am very familiar with that passage from the Gospel and I thought I *WAS* abiding by that commandment. After all, I'm a Deacon, I teach Sunday School, I attend church regularly. However, my appointment to the DPNC began a spiritual journey for me that would illustrate clearly the **depth** of love and dedication and effort that the Lord wants me to have for Him. Continued Page 2

Kelly Colao, who was our Chairperson, gave a spectacular summary of the DPNC (which, by the way, I had no idea that those initials meant Designated Pastor Nominating Committee when I was asked to be on the committee) in the 2006 Annual Report, and I will pull a few points for an illustration of my journey and the enlightenment I received after the process was over.

Last February, the DPNC distributed a questionnaire to all in the congregation, asking people to provide information for a Mission Study. After the results came back, the feelings and questions that had been posed were discussed at congregational gatherings following Sunday services. The results were compiled and put into poster form and displayed for the congregation to see, what they were looking for in a pastor and the vision they had for the church.

Using this Mission Study, the DPNC completed the multi-page CIF (Church Information Form), shared it with Session, got the approval from the Clerk of Session and the Chair of Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM) and officially posted it on PCUSA's website and got approval from the Church Leadership Connection. At that point we waited for responses that would be sent to us through the Executive Presbyter from Presbytery, who previewed the applications and sent us the ones he thought would be a match. The documents from the candidates are called PIF's (Personal Information Forms) and they too are multipage. We received 15 PIF's in total. These were all reviewed by the DPNC. Of those, 8 people were contacted to provide a tape of a sermon, 5 received conference phone interviews by the DPNC, and the 2 finalists received face-to-face interviews and the DPNC heard in-person sermons.

While this process was going on, Terms of Call had to be prepared. Joint meetings with Session occurred to get information together (would the Pastor be part-time, full-time, what could the church afford as a salary, what would the duties be?). The CIF had to be adjusted and changed a few times. Emotions were bubbling.

Our candidate was selected, Andrew said 'Yes' to our offer, the congregation voted 'Yes' to his appointment, **all** of the documents were assembled for our trip to Presbytery for COM's approval of our selection. Following that, Andrew and the DPNC and other church supporters attended the Presbytery meeting in Belmar and Andrew was presented to Monmouth Presbytery. After being questioned for 20 minutes, Andrew was approved to be our pastor. In December he was ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament and installed as pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church.

Just as children react when they finally understand a concept after having had it explained a few times or at length, so did I react when I finally understood the depth and commitment that the words "with all your heart" truly meant. Ohhhhhh, now I get it! Now I understand what those words mean, dear Lord.

These are the lessons the Lord has taught me:

* The depth of devotion encompassed in 'with all your heart' is far more than I had been giving.

* Such a job, choosing a spiritual leader for oneself and others, carries with it a huge weight of seriousness and responsibility. Continued page 3

* The importance of being a part of a spiritual group which functions as an entity was demonstrated time and time again. As frustration, or upset, or listening for an answer to prayer, or experiencing a negative influence happened to one or a few, the rest of the group would deal with it and hold all together.

* Prayer and submission to the Lord are necessary ingredients to follow Him. The concept that God had already chosen the person to lead us and we were asking guidance to find that person was very different from the way I am prone to think, (that *I* would be making the decision or choice).

* I have begun to learn how to leave my comfort zone when it is something the Lord has moved me to do. This summer I joined the Praise Team. I have always loved to sing, but the view and confidence from the pews was far greater than standing up in front of all. I was feeling comfortable with that when Gwynne asked me to sing a solo, which again rocked my CZ. Her tremendously kind and wise advice was to remember who you are singing to. I'm still working on feeling confident and comfortable in that setting, but I do know that the presence of the Lord is right there with me, I can feel it.

Heavenly Father, thank you for taking us all, your children, and providing those real-life lessons that will help us to serve you better. We ask that we keep our hearts and our minds open so we can hear You. It is not an accident that You gave me the song to sing that has these words:

“There is no other reason why we came than to glorify Your name; for You are worthy to be praised. Now we offer up our lives, as a living sacrifice; Holy, acceptable to You. We give You glory, we give You honor, we give You everything we are, lifting our hearts and hands before You, Lord.”

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

SAVE THE DATES!

Please note the following dates for upcoming Deacon-sponsored events this year:

Car Wash – June 9th, 10am to 2pm

Lakewood Blue Claws game – July 30th, 7pm

Pumpkinfest – September 29th, 9am to 2pm (rain date, October 6th)

More news to follow.

Also there will be a meeting of the Nominating Committee on Wednesday, May 16th at 7pm.

SEARCH FOR GWYNNE'S REPLACEMENTS

We would like to fill you in on our efforts to replace Gwynne when she retires at the end of May. As you probably know, Gwynne has worn many hats in her role as Parish Assistant and Music Director. We asked Gwynne to outline for us the many things that she does. We took her list, and her job description, and came up with four distinct sets of job responsibilities: Music Director, Keyboard Player, Parish Assistant and Administrative Assistant. In order to keep the cost of the Administrative Assistant down to a manageable amount, we also identified a number of tasks that Gwynne has done in the past that could be done by volunteers.

We recognized that the first two positions, Music Director and Keyboard Player, could potentially be one person, but didn't have to be. The other positions, Parish Assistant and Administrative Assistant, required different skill sets.

In her role as Parish Assistant, Gwynne has helped the minister by pulling together much of the content of the Sunday worship service – prayers, music selections, readings. She works with the minister to make sure that every part of the service is linked to the liturgy and the pastor's sermon. We felt very strongly that we wanted the person who did that to have seminary training and to have made that level of faith commitment to the church.

The Administrative Assistant role is fairly straightforward. It requires basic computing skills, good communication skills, knowledge of how our church operates, and the ability to work with the staff and also with repairmen and inspectors who occasionally need to get into the church to do work.

So, to replace Gwynne, we had four positions to fill!

The good news is that Carl Fristche has accepted our offer to be our new Music Director after Gwynne retires. He has many musical talents, including his ability to direct our bell choir, the adult choir and the Praise Team. We thought about looking outside the church for someone to fill this position, but the more we thought about it, we realized that God had already blessed us with Carl and we couldn't pass up that gift.

In addition to Carl, we have asked Robyn Tibert to be our Parish Assistant. Robyn is a natural fit for this role, since she not only has Seminary training, but she has a genuine interest in planning and preparing worship services. She is also a member of the Praise Team. Together with Andrew and Carl, Robyn will be responsible for planning the content of our services.

Steven Buckley has been selected to be our new Administrative Assistant. Steven has an in-depth knowledge of how our church operates and all of the computer skills we need to support our staff and our church operations. His faithful leadership as an elder, clerk of session, member of the Praise Team, Men's Ensemble and Choir, to name a few, made Steven stand out as one who would faithfully and enthusiastically support our church operations. Continued
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We are so thankful to Carl, Robyn and Steven for accepting these positions. We are truly blessed.

We are interviewing candidates now for the Keyboardist position and hope to have that position filled soon.

***Gail McDonald,
Personnel Committee Chair***

BLANKET SUNDAY

Mother's Day is traditionally known as "Blanket Sunday" by the Church World Services. In times of disaster (floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, etc.) Church World Service is one of the first groups to send help. They go in with blankets, tents, and as a follow-up, they go back and help the people to rebuild their lives.

On May 6th and 13th, there will be envelopes marked Church World Service in the bulletins. Please help support this ongoing mission by contributing anyway that you can and placing the envelopes in the collection plate. If it is a check, please make the check payable to Hope Presbyterian Church and mark it on the Memo line for "blankets". We will then send one check from the Church.

Thank you for your support of "Blanket Sunday".

Mission Committee

YOU CAN HELP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER BY PARTICIPATING IN THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY'S *RELAY FOR LIFE*

Location: Truax Field Park Ave. & Truax St. Long Branch

Date: June 22-23 Time: 5:00pm - 8:00 am

RELAY FOR LIFE is a unique event that offers you and your community an opportunity in the fight against cancer. It is an overnight celebration of hope, progress and answers. In honor of the ten million Americans who have survived cancer, dedicated teams of friends, families and co-workers raise funds and take turns walking around the track.

There are many ways that you can help.

* Form a team to raise money.

* Attend the Cancer Survivors' Dinner, and walk The Survivors' Lap.

The dinner is June 22 at 6:00 pm; The survivors' walk follows at 8:30 pm;

Any questions, see or call Jean Buckley 732-544-1131

or email her at jmbuckley@monmouth.com

jmbuckley@monmouth.com

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR GLEANER LADIES!

Have you noticed how the kitchen and the John Calvin Room sparkle these days? That's because our wonderful Gleaner Ladies recently arranged to have the whole area professionally cleaned. This is another example of the way the Gleaners work behind the scenes to help keep our church home beautiful and functional. ***Thank you, Gleaners!***

Very Short Notice – BUT IT WORKED! The Blackwood Concert

The Blackwood Gospel Quartet presented an energetic and thrilling concert of Southern Gospel music on Saturday April 21st at 7 pm. This was their third visit to our church in the last five years. Considering that we only had two and a half weeks notice that the quartet was going to be in the area and would be available to come again, it went VERY well. We had about 50 people in attendance, 40 of whom were from outside our church. Elder Steven Buckley (our resident Southern Gospel enthusiast!) made all the preparations and arranged for the advertising etc., himself. Thank you, Steven.

The Clerk's Communiqué

Bible Study: At the April 17th Session Meeting, Rev. Tibert led us in a study of Acts chapter 15. He pointed out that this passage gives an account of strife among the leaders of the early church at a meeting in Jerusalem. This chapter also tells of the strong disagreement between Paul and Barnabas that led to the break up of their team ministry. Discussion followed using as a lens, "How does this passage apply to us as leaders?"

In summarizing, Pastor Andrew stated that the "church" can be a messy place. Various agendas and personalities can sometimes cause conflict. By getting to know each other, working communally, being willing to compromise, and by allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us and others, God's work can move ahead.

Visit by Presbytery Moderator. Elder Thad Livingston, the current moderator of Monmouth Presbytery, was an invited guest for the meeting. During his term of office Thad was visiting all 48 churches both at a worship service and a session meeting. The Moderator invited the elders present to share concerns and comments so that he could report back to the Presbytery leadership and committees. Comments were made by the elders concerning our recent work with the Committee on Ministry and the Presbyteries budget process. He also reminded us that our church is not represented on any Presbytery Committee at the moment, and expressed the hope that since we now have a full time pastor, that situation will soon change. Thad took careful notes so he could report back on what we had offered.

Deacons: Two fundraising projects that will help provide our young people with scholarships to Camp Johnsonburg this summer and food cards to families in need (Pancake Breakfast and the Easter Candy Sale), made a combined profit of more than \$2500.00. Continued page 7

Christian Education: Thirteen of our Church School students contributed \$128 for One Great Hour of Sharing in their fish banks. The children's weekly offerings for the first three months were \$42.30. Both of these are way up from recent years. This increased giving indicates that the children understand their giving to be part of ministry to others in the name of the Lord.

The church school students go on a multi-age class visit to Ronald McDonald House in Long Branch on Sunday April 29, 2007 from 9:35 to 10:50 am.

A youth group picnic will be held June 10th after church at the manse with the Tibert's and Hayek's in charge.

April 29th starts a new five week adult study of 2nd Corinthians. There will be a Book Discussion group on May 1st. Gwynne Mahns will highlight some of the stories and answer questions about her book, 'Behind Enemy Lines'.

During July and August, Pastor Andrew will lead four sessions on various topics of interest to adults. These sessions will be held in the John Calvin Room following Sunday morning worship.

The Membership Care and Nurture Committee recommended transferring four non-attending, non-supporting members to the inactive list. Membership now stands at 119.

Property & Insurance: It has come to our attention that a tax sale of Lot 11.01 (the wooded area on Hope Road in front of the church) may be imminent. Steven Buckley is following up on some recent legal matters concerning this issue but he feels uneasy about the situation and its possible outcome.

Worship: A Saturday afternoon concert with Allison Durham Speer is planned for August 4th at 3pm. There is also a possibility that Donna Godshall will be with us in the fall.

Stewardship / Finance: It was reported that the 2006 financial books of the church are now ready to be audited.

Nominating: Because of a resignation and an out-of-State relocation, the Deacons have two openings. There is also an unfilled place on Session. The committee is actively assessing the situation and planning their work for the rest of this year.

Pastor: Pastor Tibert began what turned out to be a lively discussion on the first half of the book entitled "Family-Based Youth Ministry" by Mark DeVries. Every one contributed to the discussion.

Parish Assistant & Director of Music: Gwynne informed session that as of Sunday April 29th, the newly formed Worship Planning Team (Pastor Andrew, Robyn and Carl) will be writing the liturgies and choosing the music. The transition is going well.