



HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TINTON FALLS, NEW JERSERY



NOTES OF HOPE

A monthly publication to keep us informed.

June 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 Family and Friends of Hope Church, Summer is upon us. And I have to say that I for one am excited to be experiencing my first summer on the Jersey Shore (though I hear it can get a little hairy). I want to take the opportunity of this newsletter to inform you that coinciding with the beginning of summer, we will be starting a new seven-week sermon series through the book of Psalms. And as a primer, I thought I might lay some foundations for the sermons by reflecting on what the Psalms are, and how we as Christians are to read them. To help me, I am going to be leaning on two of my favorite Christian thinkers – C. S. Lewis and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Reading the Psalms as Poetry In preparing for this new sermon series, I was reminded by C. S. Lewis in *Reflections on the Psalms*, that we cannot fully appreciate the Psalms if we do not appreciate what they were intended for. “What must be said... is that the Psalms are poems, and poems intended to be sung: not doctrinal treaties, nor even sermons.” To turn them into something else is to miss the point. The idea here is that in studying the Bible, you cannot read a portion of scripture, “without attending to the main thing it is about.” In other words, it would be silly to read a biography on Bill Clinton or Ronald Reagan without having at least some interest in politics. Or, why pick up a newspaper if today’s current events are not on your mind. Sure, you might find something worthwhile in the funnies. But you would be missing out on the full thrust of what the newspaper purposes to be about.

In the same way, Lewis reminds us that, “The Psalms must be read as poems; as lyrics, with all the licenses and all the formalities, the hyperboles, the emotional rather than logical connections, which are proper to lyric poetry. They must be read as poems if they are to be understood; no less than French must be read as French or English as English. Otherwise we shall miss what is in them and think we see what is not.

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”Some of us may find the idea of reading the Psalms as poetry a novel and exciting idea, while others may not be that interested. Either way, Lewis raises a good point... “If we have any taste for poetry we shall enjoy this feature of the Psalms. Even those Christians who cannot enjoy it will respect it.” The reason for this is that, regardless of our own personal tastes, we acknowledge that God is behind it all – yes even poetry.

What does it mean that God should use something like human poetry to communicate something true about Himself? Lewis points out, “It seems to me appropriate, almost inevitable, that when that great Imagination which in the beginning, for Its own delight and for the delight of [all creation]... submitted to express Itself in human speech, that speech should sometimes be poetry. For poetry too is a little incarnation.” In other words, God accommodates Himself to us, even in all our various forms of speech, in order that we might know Him. And if God is speaking, it is best that we should be listening.

Seeing Christ Throughout

So we are reminded that we must approach the Psalms on their own terms – reading them as they were intended to be read. At the same time, as Christians, we acknowledge that the entire Bible is more than what it first appears to be. That behind the Bible’s human authors, there is a divine Author, with His own intentions and purposes. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in *Prayerbook of the Bible*, points out that one of the things Christ desires most is “he wants to pray with us... When our will, our whole heart, enters into the prayer of Christ, then we are truly praying.” And one of the ways that this is accomplished is when we pray through the Psalms.

Throughout the history of the Church, the Psalms have been regarded as the Church’s own prayer book. Historically the Church would recite the Psalms over and over again, with the idea that somehow, in “repeating God’s own words, we begin to pray to God.” As Bonhoeffer says, “God’s speech in Jesus Christ meets us in the Holy Scriptures. If we want to pray with assurance and joy, then the word of Holy Scripture must be the firm foundation of our prayer. Here we know that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, teaches us to pray.” But Bonhoeffer takes us even further than that. Not only does he challenge us to see the Psalms as a means of praying to God through Christ. No, if we desire to see our lives profoundly changed by the Psalms, then as Christians we must begin to view the Psalms as a witness to Christ himself. In other words, “if we want to read and to pray the prayers of the Bible, and especially the Psalms, we must not, therefore, first ask what they have to do with us, but what they have to do with Jesus Christ.” This means learning to see Christ throughout the Psalms. And it is this endeavor that we will be about in the coming weeks.

May God bless you and keep you.
Pastor Andrew

Summer Stewardship

A biblical world view of stewardship can be defined as: the use of God-given resources for the accomplishment of God-given objectives. The central essence of biblical stewardship is **managing everything God brings into the believer's life in a manner that honors God and impacts eternity.**

What does this mean to Hope Presbyterian Church? Over the summer months our attendance declines and unfortunately so does giving, not just monetary, but of self as well. In order to manage the church and its impact on our congregation and community, we need to prayerfully continue all commitments in both areas so we are equipped to handle our future.

Stewardship Prayer

O God, I resolve to put You first in my life.

I recognize that You have blessed me with all that I have and all that I am.

As your steward, I resolve to sacrifice when necessary but always to do so out of a spirit of sincere love, just as your Son, Jesus, did for me.

I humbly accept the challenge to share from my means rather than from my excess.

I recognize that being a good steward is nothing more than being truly Christian.

Dear God, I resolve, to be generous with my time, talent and treasure, giving in proportion to the gifts I have been given.

I commit myself to taking care of my body and all of creation.

I know there will be times when I will fail to be a good steward, but I pledge to keep on trying.

I will confidently live each day with a spirit of true peace and joy in knowing that I am doing your will.

Amen.

Youth Group Cook-out

Junior and Senior High students who will be in grades 7 – 12 next year are invited to join the Tiberts and Hayeks at the manse after church on June 10 for a cook-out and the opportunity to make future youth plans.

Church School News

As explained in a letter distributed May 20, students in the Multi-Age class will have the opportunity to join their teachers in receiving communion during church school on Sundays that communion is scheduled for the congregation. As part of our curriculum we do learn about the Lord's Supper and will talk about the significance of the invitation to the Table more frequently as we participate in communion. Parents should decide whether it is appropriate for their child(ren) to receive communion based on the individual maturity and understanding each child. Please see, call or email Kathy Heller to give permission.

Church School will finish on June 17 with a special morning of work in the prayer garden and hosting a Father's Day coffee time to honor dads, stepdads, and granddads. If you would like to donate some shade loving plants, mulch..... or goodies for coffee time, see Kathy Heller

Deep Thoughts...But Not Boring!

Here's your opportunity to engage with Pastor Andrew Tibert on a variety of topics that are of interest to Christians today. Starting July 1, on selected Sundays, Andrew will meet downstairs after church for discussions and information sharing on deep...but, we hope not boring topics. We'll snack on some bagels or sweet rolls, put on a pot of coffee and let the deep thoughts flow or just listen in. Share in this informal opportunity to pick Andrew's brain. See him if you have some topics to suggest!

The Clerk's Communiqué Highlights of the May 15th Stated Meeting of Session ... and beyond.

Bible Study: Rev. Tibert led the session in a study of II Corinthians Chapter 4 dealing with the concept of "treasure in clay jars"

Deacons: The car wash is set for June 9th, July 4th food outreach, Blue Claws for July 30th, annual church picnic for Sunday September 9th and the Pumpkin Fest for September 29th. It was reported that two families in our church required financial assistance recently. The congregation responded generously. We continue to pray for these families.

Christian Education: This summer, July and August, a round table discussion on theological subjects will be held following Sunday worship. These sessions will be held in the John Calvin Room following Sunday morning worship.

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

The last day for weekly church school is June 17 with the church school hosting the Fellowship time in honor of fathers.

The Membership Care and Nurture Committee: Church membership now stands at 119. Eight people have expressed interest in joining our congregation. The committee would like to take monthly communion to those who are unable to attend worship.

Property & Insurance: Many projects are underway with many not yet started. If you have skills concerning property maintenance or insurance please contact Bob Patterson.

Mission / Outreach: Soup kitchen participation has dropped from 8 to 4 for the 4:30pm shift and from 5 to 4 for the 2pm but we will continue. Please consider helping in this ministry. For more information contact Marilyn Hicken. We are still waiting for Coastal Habitat for Humanity to notify us that Wall Twp. has given its approval to start work.

Worship: A Saturday afternoon concert with Allison Durham Speer is planned for August 4th at 3pm. Robyn Tibert has accepted the position of Wedding Coordinator. A new sub. committee is being formed to deal with special events.

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Stewardship / Finance: It was reported that the 2006 financial books of the church are now ready to be audited. A revised 2007 budget is in the works. The committee was very busy working on issues that deal with Bank Accounts, Mortgage, Fundraising, Planning, and the Fall Stewardship Campaign.

The committee is requesting a donation of a good, but not necessarily new, laptop computer to aid in the accounting process for our receipts treasurer, Marilyn Gifford. This would prove less labor intensive for Lynda Hicken as she helps Marilyn each week. This would make the accounting process easier, save time and make reporting better, and best of all, easier.

Nominating: Because of a resignation and an Out-of-State relocation, the Deacons have two openings. There will be a called congregational meeting on June 3rd for the purpose of filling these two positions.

Pastor: Pastor Tibert continued the discussion, started last month, on the second half of the book entitled "Family-Based Youth Ministry" by Mark DeVries. Every one contributed to the discussion. Some suggestions made were: assisting with younger children in Sunday School; forming a team to maintain the prayer garden; ushering; and forming a youth bell or chimes choir. Rev. Tibert will meet with elders Kathy Heller and Michelle Mullan to discuss youth involvement in ministry.

Parish Assistant & Director of Music: We received Gwynne's last report in May. The report was clear and concise, as they have always been, and we will miss her in this position. (I hope the new guy [ME] does at least an adequate job in her absence.)

Deacon Car Wash - June 9th

Is your car dirty? If so, the Deacons would like to help you out. The Deacons will wash your car with tender loving care on Saturday, June 9th, from 10 am till 2 pm. Invite your friends and neighbors. There will be no charge, but donations will be accepted.

MAY 1st BOOK NIGHT WITH THE AUTHOR: BEHIND ENEMY LINES

What a thought-provoking evening we had listening to Gwynne share about her experiences ministering in Eastern Europe!

Gwynne moved with her husband to Austria in 1965, relocating 1000 miles east from their home in the U.K., following the leading of the Lord. They had been part of a “pioneering ministry” in England, doing coffee house evangelism. But they knew that the Lord was directing them to Austria, so they obeyed, not knowing what their new calling would be, or where it would take them.

In Austria, they started meeting refugees from behind the “Iron Curtain”, people who could never return to their homeland. Through these people, and also through discussions with Trans World Radio in Monte Carlo, it became clear what God was calling them to: they would go to Eastern Europe as a music team, and have a ministry of “helps”, bringing in Bibles and whatever else was needed to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this tightly controlled and dictated environment, and bringing messages and items back out to the free world.

Under this dictatorial, communist regime, the State was “god”, and the State ruled totally. The people were told what education they could get, where they could live, what job they could work at, and where that job would be. The people resented this ‘control’ and for many, it created in them a passionate hunger for the Gospel. The believers worshipped with open and devoted hearts during 3-4 hour worship services! Not all churches were ‘underground’ but whenever and wherever Christians gathered to worship, it was always with much risk because they were in direct opposition to the government.

Today, situations are different in Eastern Europe. Some countries are making strides toward various freedoms, some are not doing so well. Corruption and bribery are still evident, however. And this has a direct and huge impact on ministry. Pastors must balance “What would Jesus have me do in this situation? What does Holy Scripture say about this?” and the dictated law of the land. When we divided into four small groups this evening, Gwynne presented each group with a real-life scenario, an experience that had actually taken place, and we had to decide what to do. Would we have the courage to take risks and stand up for Jesus? We were asked: How much do you compromise your moral and ethical and religious standards to obtain gas for your car in order to deliver Scriptures into outlying areas, or get needed renovations on your church building? What would you do if your child was being persecuted in school because he or she was not part of the Marxist/Leninist Youth Movement, but was a member of the Christian youth group?

Some Pastors in that part of Europe must still make ministry decisions daily that are so incredibly foreign to our culture. We are so blessed in the United States to have the freedom to worship as we choose. Thank you, Gwynne, for helping us to see a bit more clearly what it means to follow Jesus in other parts of the world. May we always cherish, and never take for granted, the freedom we possess in America! And may God grant us the courage to be His witnesses as we walk through every day of our lives.