

HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TINTON FALLS, NEW JERSEY

NOTES OF HOPE

A monthly publication to keep us informed.

September 2007

Edited by
Erica Andresen
Published by
Steven 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 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 almost over, and we here at Hope are getting geared up for the fall. A lot of things are happening in the next couple of months, and September's newsletter looks to be a full one.

One of the things you may notice in this month's Newsletter is that there is a lot of content devoted to the theme of "Stewardship." Part of the reason for this is that the month of September is our church's Stewardship Drive, when we ask the congregation to consider their financial commitments to Hope Church in the upcoming year. And so naturally there is a lot of content (especially from our Stewardship and Finance Committee) devoted to communicating what Christian "stewardship" is all about.

But part of this also has to do with the fact that at the beginning of the year the Session (our board of Elders) decided that *stewardship* was to be the ministry focus for this year at Hope Church. For most of the year we have engaged in leading our various ministries with this focus on stewardship in mind. It is for this reason that I am going to be preaching on the idea of *Christian stewardship* throughout the month of September.

Personally, I think the word “stewardship” has gotten a bad rap in the Church. For many of us stewardship has become a codeword for “giving money to the church.” And honestly, this is totally understandable. The only time we really hear the word used is during this time of the year when the church is trying to raise financial support for the upcoming year through Stewardship Drives and Campaigns. And the bottom line always seems to end up being about money. How can we not be left with the impression that stewardship is really spelled Steward\$hip? Am I right?

But is “giving money” really the true meaning of stewardship?

In the New Testament, “stewardship” (*oikonamia*) occurs nine different times, and in fact, is never used to designate the action of giving, much less the giving of money. A “steward” (*oikonomos*) was a household manager. And *stewardship* refers to the responsibilities or actions of managing a household or business. In other words... a steward is one who uses an owner’s resources to manage a household or business on the owner’s behalf. Stewardship is making decisions and doing the things that you have to do in order to make the business profitable.

Now if this is true, what does it mean for us as Christians, who are called to be God’s stewards in the world? Well, I can’t spill all the beans now! I have to save something for my sermons. 😊

But let me ask you this question. Let’s say that God has gone away on a trip, and has made you the *steward* of his estate. He has entrusted you with the responsibility of caring for and managing his various resources on his behalf until he returns. You, and no one else, are responsible for looking after his household. With that responsibility in mind, how has your understanding of the word “stewardship” changed?

For the next month we are going to be looking at this idea of Christian stewardship, and all that it entails. And it is my pray that, as a community of faith, we begin asking the question, “What is God calling us to as his Stewards?”

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
Pastor Andrew

September is Stewardship Month

During the month of September our focus during Sunday Service will be how to be better Stewards for Christ. Pastors Tibert's sermons will be reflective upon the many areas of stewardship in our lives. September 30th will be ***LOYALTY SUNDAY***. This will be a very special service. Please plan on joining the Finance & Stewardship Committee after the service in the John Calvin Room for a time of fellowship.

SAVE THE DATE

Stewardship-Fellowship-Fun
Join us for a Pasta Dinner and Silent Auction
Saturday, November 3, 2007
6:30pm
Hope Church – John Calvin Room
Adults \$12.00
Senior Citizens \$8.00
Children 7-12 \$6.00
Children under 6 FREE
Invite your friends

Stewardship Prayer

Generous and loving God, You call us to be disciples of your son Jesus and good stewards of all your many gifts.

Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness and deeper appreciation of your countless blessings.

Transform us through the power of your Spirit to nurture a stewardship way of life marked by faith-filled prayer, service to our neighbor and generous sharing. Teach us to be faithful servants of your gifts. With Your help, may we return ten-fold the gifts entrusted to us.

Bless our capital stewardship campaign with a deepening devotion to prayer, a growing commitment for service, and increasing levels of generosity as we work to advance the mission of Hope Presbyterian Church.

We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

“Stewardship is everything we do after we say, ‘I Believe’.”

Dear Fellow Stewards,

Did you know that the Bible contains more than 2,350 verses that pertain to the stewardship of money and possessions? That’s a lot of verses dealing with a touchy subject to many people. But that’s what the Bible does...it makes us think about things in our lives that often make us a bit uncomfortable, but for good reasons.

Throughout the Bible, God uses many people with limited means, His stewards, to gain victories in His name; people such as Abraham, Joshua and Moses. By being faithful and listening to God’s command, they were victorious! God also calls upon us, the people of Hope Presbyterian Church, to be His faithful stewards as well. By using our gifts, we could accomplish so much!

In 2007 we stepped out in faith by having our first full time pastor in many years. We knew it would be a stretch for us financially, but we took a leap of faith knowing this was God’s plan for our church. We have been staying afloat, but we need to be ever faithful in our promised pledges for the remainder of 2007 and into 2008.

Through the month of September, Sunday services will be based around different areas of stewardship. September 30th will be **Loyalty Sunday**. This is the Sunday that pledges will be accepted. Our pledge cards are very important in that we base the church’s commitment on maintaining staff and facilities as well as Christ’s work in the community on your commitment of financial stewardship. Yes, we all have our own tight budgets and costs are rising in our own lives. The church is not excluded from these increases either. Each week when we place our offerings in the offering plate we say a unison prayer of dedication asking God to use our gifts for glorifying His name. We in return are showing our loyalty and obedience back to Him, who has, and will continue to be, gracious and loyal to us.

Yours in Christ,
The Finance and Stewardship Committee

Testimonies Needed !!

What sort of stewardship have you shown that has been returned to you through God's grace? How has God blessed you in return for your loyalty to Him? We are seeking anybody in the congregation willing to share a time when you have been blessed in return for your faithful stewardship while doing Christ's work. Please submit something in writing to Scott or Cyndie Van Bavel by September 23rd. We will be placing these in the bulletin for September 30th and will be asking some of you to share your testimonies during the service on the 30th. Please email them to scott.vanbavel@verizon.net or cyndie.vanbavel@verizon.net, or hand to us in person. We highly encourage all to participate.

Please see the testimony below of how God has blessed someone in our congregation:

To me stewardship has never been about what I would get in return for my stewardship, but instead what my offerings bring to others. I would like to tell you about some recent changes I have noticed. Some months back I read an article in a women's magazine about ways to improve relationships with your spouse. One thing to do was to talk to your spouse about something they could do for you. It needed to be explicit and something that could actually be accomplished. I did not talk to my wife about this, but I knew that she wanted me to go to church more often with her. I didn't do this to become a church person; just to try to help our relationship. Since going to church I have become more involved in helping out with different projects. I have been told by people that they appreciate all that I do for the church and that they are glad to see me. I must say that I didn't start this to get so involved, but when asked and if I can help, I will. The change in my relationship with my wife has also been noticeable to me. We seem to be closer and talk more now. So again stewardship is not about what you get out of it, but how others come closer to God through your gifts and because of your selfless giving, God will make his light shine down on you as well.

10 Stewardship Principles

1 Respond gratefully

“...and God has fed us. All that we do is a response to God's grace. Everything we are, have, and do comes from God, but of all, God gives the gift of Jesus Christ and the community of believers. I do believe with you! Our mission is faith in Jesus Christ and love for him or her, of our dove. (Letter addressed to God that responds)

“...but they give themselves first to the Lord.”
 9 Corinthians 8:5

3 Sacrifice proportionately

“...giving to me, to see through the eyes and the resources we are called to surrender others may share in God's word and blessing.”

“...give according to their means, and even beyond their means.”
 2 Corinthians 8:12

2 Obey responsibly

“...to give God as a gift for ourselves, each of God's word. We acknowledge our sin and fit our gift into the space by the gift of God and by the building up of the body of Christ. The gift, however, is received by the Spirit's guidance, including the gifts we had our bodies, senses and our minds.”

“...you glorify God by your obedience to the commandment of the gospel of Christ.”
 2 Corinthians 8:13

4 Give willingly

“...to be moved by the Holy Spirit, who has been implanted in spite of our sin. We give our lives, talents, and resources freely.”

“...For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave...”
 2 Corinthians 8:3

5 Share abundantly

“...to see you received the portion of your gift, a free will gift of the members of God. We give to share in the body of Christ. We are not free from our gift by the best of all.”

“...and God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.”
 2 Corinthians 9:8

6 Give proportionately

“...our love or giving in proportion to our abilities. We are to give according to our means, not according to someone or a budget.”

“...the generous, I thank, the gift is acceptable according to what one does not have.”
 2 Corinthians 8:12

7 Commit intentionally

“...to give your gift, not about your gift, and following through. All members of the body of Christ, we are asked to have a commitment of our time, talents, and resources to the gift of God. We are not free from our gift by the best of all.”

“...arrange in advance for this beautiful gift, that you have promised.”
 2 Corinthians 9:5

8 Contribute regularly

“On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn.”
 1 Corinthians 16:2

“...and God has fed us. All that we do is a response to God's grace. Everything we are, have, and do comes from God, but of all, God gives the gift of Jesus Christ and the community of believers. I do believe with you! Our mission is faith in Jesus Christ and love for him or her, of our dove. (Letter addressed to God that responds)

“...but they give themselves first to the Lord.”
 9 Corinthians 8:5

9 Live genuinely

“I am testing the genuineness of you here against the earnestness of others.”
 2 Corinthians 8:8

“...to see you received the portion of your gift, a free will gift of the members of God. We give to share in the body of Christ. We are not free from our gift by the best of all.”

10 Accept a challenge

“...the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”
 2 Corinthians 9:6

“...to see you received the portion of your gift, a free will gift of the members of God. We give to share in the body of Christ. We are not free from our gift by the best of all.”



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Faithful in Christ's Company & Care

Hope Backyard Picnic

Make plans now to attend the tenth annual Hope Backyard Picnic, to be held on Sunday, September 9th. The picnic will take place in the back yard of the manse following the worship service, and in the case of inclement weather will be moved indoors. Come dressed casually with your own lawn chair and ready for an enjoyable gathering of our Church family. Some picnic details:

The picnic sign up list is available in the Narthex. Please sign up by Sunday, September 2nd.

- Hamburgers, hot dogs, drinks, paper products, and utensils will be provided. (Note: Special thanks to Ceil Norman for again arranging for donations of hamburgers and hot dogs from her employer, Key Foods)

We ask each family to bring a dessert to share (if your last name begins with A through L) or a side salad to share (if your last name begins with M through Z).

So mark your calendars, sign up, and get ready for some fun. Questions may be addressed to any Deacon.

Pumpkinfest and Kraft Sale

Hope Church will be holding its annual Pumpkinfest and Craft Sale on Saturday, September 29th from 9 am to 2 pm (rain date, October 6th). This will be a fun time for the entire family, and also an opportunity for outreach to the community. As always, we will be selling pumpkins, mums, corn stalks, hay bales, and baked goods. A large number of crafters will be present selling their special crafts.

In addition, you can sign up to help in a number of ways: selling pumpkins/mums, kids' activities, taking a turn as Mr. Pumpkin, cooking lunch, selling baked goods, setup on Friday afternoon at 3pm, setup on Saturday morning at 7:30am, or cleanup on Saturday afternoon at 2pm.



Bible Study

Back to Basics The Hope Way

No term papers, oral reports, memorization, or pop quizzes to worry about! And no more need to sit in the back of the room at Bible studies. Save seven Sunday evenings for **Bible 101**. From Oct. 14 through Nov. 25 at 6:30 in our John Calvin room, you can get the Bible basics that you may have missed or forgotten. This is a wonderful opportunity to get back to basics and study the Word under the tutelage Rev. Andrew Tibert. Don't be shy, grab a Bible and go back-to-school with **Bible 101**.

Church School

Church School Begins Sept. 9

Big news for church school students...we're expanding! That's right, we're going to have three classes covering more grades:

Preschool through kindergarten

Grades 1 - 4

Grades 5 - 8

Join us on Sun., Sept. 9 as we begin our new studies for this year. Preschoolers through Grade 4 will begin with a theme on "Faith." Unit I consists of four lessons on Noah and Joseph following God's unexpected plan for them. Unit II explores following God in unexpected ways and includes six lessons on such topics as the Exodus, Passover, and Joshua at Jericho. The theme concludes in Unit III with three lessons on "Still Following God," taken from Psalms and Ezra, from exile through the rebuilding of the Temple.

This year our students in Grades 5 - 8 will inaugurate a totally new program for us called, "I Know My Bible." These students will spend this church school year studying their Bibles from Genesis through Revelation. Books of the Bible will be grouped under such themes as the Torah, Hebrew History, Hebrew Wisdom, Prophets, Gospels, the Early Church, and Letters to the Early Church. Students will main-

New Members

The next new members “classes” will be held on Sunday, September 23 and September 30 in the manse right after Sunday morning worship. These informal “get acquainted” sessions, which are for anyone who might be considering joining Hope Church, will be led by Rev. Tibert, and Elders Steven Buckley and Dave Harris. We will discuss what it means to be a Presbyterian, what it means to be a member of Hope Church and what ministry opportunities are available. The September 30 meeting will conclude with a potluck lunch provided by the session.

If you have ever thought about joining Hope, please take this opportunity to explore the possibility. For more details, see Rev. Tibert or Dave Harris.

Prayer Chain

Have you ever wondered what happens to the “bluies” that you fill out and put in the offering plates on Sunday morning? The prayer requests are compiled and sent to members of the Hope Presbyterian Prayer Chain, who pray for these requests during the week. The prayer chain is always looking for new people.

The Bible admonishes us, “Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16) If you would like to join in this vital part of Hope’s ministry, see **Ginny Catenaro** or **Dave Harris**.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The members of the Prayer Shawl Ministry have kept busy this summer and gave me nineteen shawls to deliver. I took them to the County Nursing Home where the ladies are truly thankful for them. Keep up the good work!!

Session

Nominating Committee: News About Names

The Nominating Committee is looking into a new direction for filling the 2008 slate of church officers. The committee is made up of representation of elders, deacons and members at large who are not serving at this time in an office.

One goal was to create a description of what it means to be an elder and deacon. The committee is now considering the membership list to see what members should be considered to fill the openings for the New Year. The second goal is to approach possible candidates and ask them to pray fully consider their gifts and the needs of the job. The committee will set up interviews with candidates who are being considered and by this procedure candidates will have a better idea of what is part of each job. The Lord is lifting up new leaders in our church right now! Be open to His leading as we examine ourselves to do His work!

Congregation of Hope Church, please be in prayer for the work of this committee and for the members that we will be sharing with for this important leadership positions!

Thinking Outside the Plate

Hope church needs the help of our members to continue its wonderful work in so many areas. Christian education, missions, and help for our troubled families and neighbors can only be provided by your generosity. I have gathered informative pamphlets which will detail how you can include Hope church in your estate planning, from your IRA's, charitable gifts, and other plans managed or assisted by the Presbyterian Foundation.

For information contact John Schwartz or Pastor Tibert. You may also call the foundation at 800-856-6127 or go to www.PresbyterianFoundation.org.