

HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TINTON FALLS, NEW JERSEY



NOTES OF HOPE

A monthly publication to keep us informed.

May 2008

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

Dear friends and family of Hope...

Recently I preached a sermon that in part shared Session's vision for ministry at Hope Church in the upcoming year. You might have called it a state of the union address. I thought it might be a good idea to communicate the highlights of that vision here in our newsletter.

Where we have come

One of the things that has become a regular practice here at Hope is for the Session to take a retreat at or around the beginning of the year to review what has taken place in the last year, and to vision what God is calling us to in the New Year. Part of that process for us this year was reviewing the "ministry focus" we believed God had led us to over the last year. Allow me to take a moment and remind you of the theme for that year.

In 2007 the Session believed that God was calling us (both as leaders and as a church) to focus our ministries around the theme of Stewardship. During our retreat God had brought this passage from Corinthians to our attention... "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold Grace of God."

With a deep awareness that God has richly blessed our congregation, full of deeply compassionate and loving people, each with many precious gifts and abilities, we felt that we were being called to attend to how we were cultivating and stewarding our many blessings. So with Stewardship as our theme, each ministry committee articulated a ministry goal for the upcoming year of 2007. Among them were...

The stewardship of our facility by its upkeep and its expansion.

Encourage greater congregational involvement in the worship service.

Cultivate a more visible public presence within the community.

Pay greater attention to Budget, "Mortgage", Investment Management, Fundraising, and the Stewardship sermon series.

Oversee the staffing transition we are experiencing.

Expand the number of Adult Bible Studies.

Develop New Membership Classes with Stewardship with stewardship as one of the focuses of the class.

Develop a full process by which we select new leaders.

It happened to be these same goals that the Session reviewed this last January in reminding ourselves where we had come from over the year. And I must say it was deeply rewarding to see how God, through his servants, had worked to honor those goals in real (and sometimes surprising) ways.

Where we are going

And so, having reviewed where we had come from, we turned our hearts and minds towards asking the question, "Where is the Lord leading us now?" What does he want us to focus on in this new year of 2008? Through discussion and prayer over the course of that Saturday afternoon a general theme continued to emerge over and over again. Growth.

We knew that God's good desire for his church was for it to grow... to increase... to engage in his mission and to flourish. And we believed that this was indeed true for us at Hope. And so we came up with the ministry focus of Grow Hope – "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

But what did growth look like for us? What did it entail? Was it strictly numerical – focused on increasing membership? Or was there a broader, more comprehensive vision of growth that God had in mind for us? It was out of these questions that the Session came to develop ministry goals for 2008. Allow me to share them with you. They are...

Grow in generous and excellent outpouring of our love in worship to God.

Grow in hands on care for our community, visible presence in our community, and in hospitality – welcoming people to Hope.

Grow in our depth of understanding and excitement in our individual ministries.

Grow in programs to disciple our children.

Grow in stewardship of time for the benefit of all.

Grow in our responsibility to maintain our properties.

Grow in commitment to full-time pastoral ministry – end of Designated Pastor.

Grow the congregation in Biblical literacy & authentic relationships.

Grow in the nurturing of new leadership

It is in a spirit of communication and partnership that I share these Ministry Goals with you today... in the full knowledge that it is only with your partnership and participation, and even more so with God's very blessing, that we will see and experience the kind of true growth he is calling us to. May God bless this vision of the church at Hope, and the spirit in which it was conceived. And may God bless each one of our efforts as we seek to participate in what God is doing.

Grace and Peace to you,
Andrew

Yard Sale

Our Spring Fundraiser was a huge success

Thanks to all our helpers and some very unique items

The Big bear stole the show and got lots of attention from people driving by

Mark your calendars for next year--and again Thanks to all who helped and baked

-Stewardship Committee

Prayer of Gratitude for May

Gracious God, in the busy-ness of my day, I sometimes forget to stop to thank you for all that is good in my life.

My blessings are many and my heart is filled with gratefulness for the gift of living, for the ability to love and be loved, for the opportunity to see the everyday wonders of creation, for sleep and water, for a mind that thinks and a body that feels.

I thank you, too, for those things in my life that are less than I would hope them to be; things that seem challenging, unfair, or difficult. When my heart feels stretched and empty, and pools of tears form in my weary eyes, still I rejoice that you are as near to me as my next breath and that in the midst of turbulence, I am growing and learning.

In the silence of my soul, I thank you most of all for your unconditional and eternal love.

Amen.

—from Prayers for Living



What God Wants From Us is.....

In last month's newsletter the question was posed that if Christ sacrificed himself for us, what does He want from us in return? You could be putting a list together in your mind right now or you could be asking, "What is it that I could possibly give back after what He did for me?" It seems overwhelming when you think about it, doesn't it? Psalm 116:12 says *'What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me?'*

Scripture reminds us of what we are to be in Matthew 5:14-16

You are the light of the world; a city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put in under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

He wants us to be his disciples. Each of us has something unique to give back to Him. God has blessed us with many gifts. God wants great things of us, but never more than we are capable of giving. At various times in our lives we will be able to give more of our time, talents or treasure depending on the circumstances. God will show us the way. We want to strive to live a life of Intentional Stewardship. Intentional Stewardship is beginning to live your life to the fullest as God intended you to do.

Intentional.....Stewardship

Two powerful words that we know individually. Together they combine into a powerful concept, one that can change your life.

‘Intentional’

We all want to make the best of what we have, make a difference in this world, and have an intimate relationship with God. None of this happens by chance. If we want these things to happen, we need to be intentional.

‘Stewardship’

We realize we have been given certain gifts, abilities and talents. We have been given and continue to receive certain material blessings. We don’t want to waste them; in other words we want to practice good stewardship of what God has given us.

Intentional stewardship is not intended to make a person question every act at every minute or to make sure you are doing enough or being good enough. This is not intended to make a person feel guilty or inadequate.

Intentional stewardship is a life of consciousness; about who each of us is, the circumstances of our lives, and the blessings we, uniquely and individually have been given, Intentional stewardship leads us in heartfelt gratitude, to give back to God and others some portion of our time, talent and treasure. God has graciously and abundantly blessed us. So, in some small way we want to acknowledge that divine generosity with our own human generosity.

There are three steps of Intentional Stewardship that we are going to explore over this upcoming year.

- Observe
- Evaluate
- Act

Observe – take an honest and prayerful look at what I am currently doing with these three gifts I have been given by God; how I spend my time, use my talents and where I apportion my means.

Evaluate – I look out and consider where my time, talent and treasure are needed

My personal needs
My family's needs
My church's needs
My community's needs
The world's needs

So that I can make a proper evaluation I ask: “What unmet needs do I see in each of those three areas? Where do I see that I am needed? Where can I make a difference?”

Act – I then proceed to act as my observation and evaluation tell me in a deliberate and prayerful way. I devote portions of my time, talent and treasure as my newly conscious self leads me to.

~Excerpts from New Beginnings- My Opportunity for Giving

As each has received a gift, employ it for one another; as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Peter 4:10

Stewardship ~it's already in your heart



Deacon Car Wash – May 10th

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, May 10th, from 10 am till 2 pm. Invite your friends and neighbors. There will be no charge, but donations will be accepted.

What's New in Church School?

Church School students have collected \$60 in their fish banks to donate to One Great Hour of Sharing. Thanks, kids, for participating in this Lenten collection that helps folks in need around the world acquire the means to provide for themselves, through the gifts of clean water, farming equipment, or livestock.

“Deep, But Not Boring...” isn’t just for adults! After the service on April 20, our older elementary through high school students met with Andrew Tibert to share with him some of the questions that they have. Topics covered included Jesus’s miracles, Judgment Day, the origin of the Bible. And what’s with those people being eight hundred years old in the Bible? Andrew took on those queries and more to the satisfaction of all attending.

For the remainder of the year, our junior and senior classes are combined to study the parables of Jesus. We’re learning the meaning of these stories, what they say about the Kingdom of God, and how they apply to the way we live as followers of Christ. The nursery group is using the same parables. Often, the older students present a skit about the parable to them at the end of the lesson. We’ll finish up the year on June 1. Before that, we’ll make our own Church School banner and sing and demonstrate some fancy footwork during the worship service.

Don’t forget that we’re having VBS once again this summer. From July 7-11, 9:15-12:00, we’ll be sharing the Good News with not only our own children, but those in our local communities. Do you know children who would enjoy this experience? More help is always welcome, too. See Michelle Mullan for more information.

Tammy's Top 10 Ways to Increase Tithing



- Turn it down
 - 3% off per degree
 - =\$180.00yr
- Twisty Bulbs
 - One bulb = \$45.00 yr
- Take Advantage at Dr.
 - Sample = \$30.00 mon
- Tame Take-Out
 - \$20 McD= 7.00 Pizza
- Try Coupons
 - 10-20 % off bill
- Turn in In
 - Gold = 1000.00 an oz
- Throw a Party
 - Tastefully Simple, Avon, etc
- The Sale
 - Tag, Yard, Garage
- Typing = \$\$\$\$\$
 - EBAY Half.com, Amazon
- Tax Advantages
 - Check with employer or Tax preparer

Wednesday Night “WORSHIP” Series

So...(you might ask...) “What in the world can they find to talk about regarding worship for **6 weeks?!**” Let me tell you....

A group of inquiring “students” of all ages met with Pastor Andrew and Robyn at the manse for 6 Wednesday evenings during Lent. Our topic of discussion: Worship. What is worship? What does worship mean to you? What sorts of things (images, concepts, feelings) do we associate with worship? We talked about diverse worship experiences we had had. And ultimately we talked about eight core characteristics for Christian worship that should be present regardless of worship style; worship should be ...

- + Biblical – The Bible is the source of our knowledge of God and the world’s redemption in Jesus Christ.
- + Dialogical – In worship, God speaks and God listens.
- + Covenantal – In worship, God’s graciousness and new covenant with us in Christ is renewed, affirmed, and sealed.
- + Trinitarian – In worship we address the triune God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit one God in three persons (worship is God centered).
- + Communal – The Gospel of Christ draws us into communal life with other people.
- + Hospitable, caring, welcoming and ultimately missional – The worshipping Christian community is the setting in which the Gospel proclamation materializes, that is, where it is seen, felt, heard, and tasted.
- + “In but not of” the world – Christian worship reflects the culture it is in, but Is not enslaved to that culture.
- + sacramental – At the heart of Christian worship is the celebration of the Sacraments.

In summation, worship happens whenever we come before God, bow down (sometimes figuratively, sometimes literally) before Him in reverence and awe, devotion and humility, and extend our hearts toward the heart of God. With Jesus as our intercessor, and God’s Holy Spirit as our enabler, we can worship – we can reach out – to God wherever we are, whether that be in church, at work, in our car, while doing house or yard work, or wherever the path of daily living takes us. But let us always remember that worship is not a spectator sport. We are called to be active participants. We are called to “seek the Lord while He may be found...” He promises that as we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. And in that communion between His Spirit and ours, we shall find peace and hope and rest.



SAVE THE DATE

Celebration Sunday Picnic

June 8, 2008 immediately following our worship service

Bring a chair or a blanket and come prepared for fun and fellowship as we celebrate all the unique gifts and precious friends God has given us. All food will be provided by our session and committees. This is our way of saying Thank You to each of you for playing an important role within our congregation as we GROW HOPE together this year.

May Birthdays

- | | |
|----|-----------------------|
| 1 | Linda Morgan |
| 4 | Kathy Heller |
| 7 | Emma Rivera |
| 9 | Mary Harris |
| 10 | Robyn Tibert |
| 11 | Conor Mullan |
| 13 | Virginia Lippincott |
| 14 | Ingrid Boker |
| 15 | Susan Ellsworth |
| 16 | Joyce Waldron |
| 16 | Melba Van Pelt |
| 18 | David Cotton |
| 19 | Willie Brown (father) |
| 28 | Mary Tursi |
| 30 | George Jones |
| 30 | Jason Evans |