

HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TINTON FALLS, NEW JERSEY



NOTES OF HOPE

A monthly publication to keep us informed.

July 2008

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Published by
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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

Friends and Family of Hope,

I am writing in order to give you a glimpse of the upcoming sermon series, and inform you of a Christian Education opportunity that will be available to you this summer. This last year I have talked a lot about the difference between “the Gospel” and “Religion.” How the Gospel is more than just Religion. Religion is primarily advice or instruction on how you are to live. The Gospel is “Good News.” It is announcement. It is proclamation. Religion is fundamentally concerned with what you are to do for God. The Gospel is fundamentally concerned with what God has done for you. It is the “Good News” that something has happened (in history) that has changed your condition forever.

I have been thinking a lot about how this understanding of the nature of the Gospel becomes the primary narrative of our lives. Narrative... that's an interesting term, the definition of “narrative” is: a story or an account of a sequence events in the order in which they happened; the art or process of telling a story. It is the bible's contention that the story of God's act of salvation, seen most fully in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, is THE great story of history. It's the story that frames all of human history, and gives it meaning and purpose. In other words, what God has done for us through Jesus, that we could not do for ourselves – namely redeem us and reconcile us to God – is the story that brings defines all our stories and makes sense of them. This is, and always has been, the bible's contention.

So how do we tell our stories today? It used to be that people would gather together as a community in order that they might listen as one member of the community would recount the stories of old, so that all might hear and learn from the wisdom of the past. Later on, with the development of the printing press, the reading of literature became the primary means by which our culture told its stories. And not so long ago, each evening, you could find families gathering together around the radio, again, to listen as our stories would be preformed and broadcasted throughout the country over the radio waves. Now, increasingly, movies have become the preferred medium by which our culture tells its stories to itself.

To be sure, we go to the movies for many different reasons – to pass the time, to hang out with friends, to be entertained, to be awed, humored, scared. But at their best, movies help us explore the meaning of our own stories (life, love, sorrow, suffering, etc.). They help us unpack who we are, where we have come from, and where we are going.

If it is true that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is THE narrative by which we understand and make meaning of our own stories, then we should be intentional in looking for the ways in which the Gospel has found its way into the contemporary stories of our culture. When we do this we make ourselves more versed in identifying themes of the Gospel and applying them to our lives (in a sense developing eyes to see and ears to hear), and in communicating its truth in new and fresh ways to those who have yet to hear and believe.

This summer, like many throughout the country, Hope Church is going to spend a summer at the movies. By this I mean each Sunday we are going to explore some great themes of the Gospel that can be found in the stories we tell through movies. I am titling the sermon series “The Gospel in Film.” Along with that I want to invite you to come out to church on Saturday and participate in “Saturday Night at the Movies,” where we will be previewing the movie that I will be using in the sermon on Sunday (most movies will be kid friendly). And then every Sunday after church we will be having a “Deep, But Not Boring, Theological Conversation” about the Gospel themes that have been brought up in the movie and sermon.

So I invite you to come out and participate in this summer’s sermon and roundtable discussion series, where we will be discovering what God has to say to us about the Gospel through film.

See you at the movies!

Grace and Peace to you,
Pastor Andrew

The Story of Little Bluie and the Prayer Chain

Perhaps you don't really know me. I mean, I know you see me every week when you come to church. I live in that little rack in the pew. You know, with the Hymnals and Bibles. And Pastor Andrew introduces me every week. He reminds everyone to "fill out the bluiies". But do you know me...really know me...more than just my name? Do you know that I have an important job to do?

The first important thing is that people can put their name on me. That's one of the ways that Mr. Heller knows when someone is missing. Then he lets the Deacons (and some other people) know, and they can see if there is any way we can help. But I think my most important job is to carry prayer requests to Mr. Heller. Let me tell you how that works.

On Sunday mornings, during the worship service, I just sit there waiting until someone picks me out of the rack. Then that person can write on me whatever they want people to pray about. The prayer request can be detailed, or not; it can include someone's name, or not. God knows the details whether you write them or not.

After I am written on, the person puts me into the offering plate. I just lie there very quietly, guarding my special message. After the worship service, an usher takes me and puts me with a bunch of other bluiies, and gives us all to Mr. Heller. He takes us all home with him.

When Mr. Heller gets home, he looks at all of us very carefully, and he types a list on his computer of all the prayer messages we have carried from that day. Then the list gets sent to about a dozen people who have signed up to pray for whatever requests come in. Those people get that list in their email, and then they can pray. It's really very easy. So actually, my job is done when Mr. Heller is finished transferring my special message to his list. But I want to tell you a couple of other important things.

I wasn't sure you knew how important I am, and what a big job I have, and what happens to those things people write each week. So I wanted to tell you about that. But also, Mr. Heller told me to tell you that if anyone feels like they want to be a part of the Prayer Chain, and have that special list emailed to them, all they need to do is tell Mr. Heller. He even gave me his email address to make it easy: wheller@gmail.com. In case someone doesn't have email, but wants to pray, he gave me his phone number too: 732-542-1283. He sends lists out "snail mail" too! Also, we bluiies all want to get involved in this praying thing. Mr. Heller says it would be good if more people wrote things for people to be praying about. So I want to encourage you to write requests....I know from overhearing some conversations that a lot of you have things that could use some prayer!

Thanks for listening to my story....I'll see you next week when you come to worship!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School is coming to Hope Church this summer. It will be from July 7th through July 11th, 9:15am -12pm. It is available to all potty-trained 3 year olds through third graders. Please pass this along to anyone you feel might be interested. Registration forms are available in the Narthex. This is an outreach program so participants need not be members. Vacation Bible School will only be successful with your help. If you have any questions or wish to help in any way please contact Michelle Mullan (732)222-9182 or michellemullan709@comcast.net.

STEWARDSHIP

Feeling doubtful about Intentional Stewardship?

God has a positive answer:

| <u>YOU SAY</u> | <u>GOD SAYS</u> | <u>BIBLE VERSES</u> |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| You say: "It's impossible" | God says: All things are possible | (Luke 18:27) |
| You say: "I'm too tired" | God says: I will give you rest | (Matthew 11:28-30) |
| You say: "Nobody really loves me" | God says: I love you | (John 3:1 6 & John 3:34) |
| You say: "I can't go on" | God says: My grace is sufficient | (II Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15) |
| You say: "I can't figure things out" | God says: I will direct your steps | (Proverbs 3:5- 6) |
| You say: "I can't do it" | God says: You can do all things | (Philippians 4:13) |
| You say: "I'm not able" | God says: I am able | (II Corinthians 9:8) |
| You say: "It's not worth it" | God says: It will be worth it | (Roman 8:28) |
| You say: "I can't forgive myself" | God says: I Forgive you | (I John 1:9 & Romans 8:1) |
| You say: "I can't manage" | God says: I will supply all your needs | (Philippians 4:19) |
| You say: "I'm afraid" | God says: I have not given you a spirit of fear | (II Timothy 1:7) |
| You say: "I'm always worried and frustrated" | God says: Cast all your cares on ME | (I Peter 5:7) |
| You say: "I'm not smart enough" | God says: I give you wisdom | (I Corinthians 1:30) |
| You say: "I feel all alone" | God says: I will never leave you or forsake you | (Hebrews 13:5) |

Stewardship is everything we do after we say **YES** to Jesus Christ

Stewardship Quote of the month ~

"For it is in giving that we receive." - St. Francis of Assisi

Stewardship Surveys

Wonder what happened to the surveys that some of you filled out? The Stewardship Task Force has tabulated the results and will be forwarding them to each committee for discussion. We received 22 surveys and each one had valuable insight regarding where people thought we were doing well here at Hope down to where we need the most improvement. Every member or regular visitor's input is valued. If you haven't already filled out a survey, you may download it from the church website found where our monthly newsletters are. Additional copies are located in the drawer at the Welcome Desk in the Narthex or in Cyndie Van Bavel's mailbox downstairs. It's never too late to fill one out and your opinion matters so that we can continue to Grow Hope in 2008.

Steve Troxel puts out a daily online devotional that always seems to hit the nail on the head. Here's a recent devotional that should be shared with all of us as we explore what true stewardship is all about:

From A Pure Heart

As Jesus watched people place their offering into the temple treasury, He noticed a poor widow who put in two coins valued at less than a penny.

Mark 12:43-44

"Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything - all she had to live on.'"

This passage gives us a wonderful example of faith and how God must be the Lord of our finances - but the real message actually goes much deeper.

We have all been blessed in so many ways; and we are called to be good stewards, or managers, of all our blessings. As a good steward, we must present all we possess back to our Heavenly Father as an offering of love. Yes, this relates to our financial resources, but it also means we are to offer our gifts, abilities, talents, and time back to God through service and ministry to others. God created us (the complete package of who we are) for a purpose. We will need to spend good quality time with God to fully understand our purpose, but we can be absolutely sure that God has NOT blessed us so we can advance our own selfish agenda!

Every one of our blessings, no matter how small, are given so we can bless God in return. We often hold back from ministry opportunities because we feel our "offering" is insignificant. We feel inadequate to serve or unworthy to make a true contribution to the work of God's Kingdom. But God is never concerned with the magnitude of a gift; He is, and always has been, concerned and blessed by the condition of our heart: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). How we give is much more important than what we give.

God does not need our money, time, ability, or anything we accomplish or produce. But He loves us dearly and desires to receive the complete love and devotion which is given with our offering. Jesus was blessed by a widow who gave from her heart, even though the actual gift carried very little earthly value.

If we want our service or ministry to have significance in the eyes of God, we must focus on the One to whom we are giving rather than on the value of the gift in the eyes of man. With our eyes focused, we must then give with all the love in our heart. If our heart is pure in the giving, God will receive our offering as a true blessing. There are no worthless or insignificant gifts when the gift is given from a pure heart.

More of Steve's devotionals can be sent to you daily by signing up at www.gdwm.org/subscribe.htm.

New Fundraiser Opportunities!!!!!!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Fun, family and fellowship –stewardship too!! Applebee's Dining to Donate Enjoy a meal that is filling and fulfilling Dine at Applebee's, 14 Park Rd off Hope Rd., Tinton Falls and 10% of your food order will be donated to HOPE CHURCH on August 12th from 5-8 PM Hey MOM no cooking if you bring the family! We will be handing out the flyer needed to participate On the two Sundays prior to Tuesday, August 12th, After service—if you need the flyer mailed, please Call Nancy Oliviero at 732-571- 3378

We need your input—

Our Stewardship committee is looking for new ways to make our members feel they have a special attachment to our HOPE Church. Hope is growing and we want to offer every opportunity to our congregation to be part of the fellowship.

We have come up with a plan for a Memorial Garden (to be in the area of the Prayer Garden). We hope this will give those of us that are looking for a resting place within the confines of our Church property the opportunity to pre-purchase a plaque and either have their ashes placed in an Urn and buried on the property or, as some choose to do, sprinkled in the area of the Memorial Garden.

This is just in the very beginning planning stages and that is why we want your ideas, thoughts and blessing. Please take a minute to tell us if:

You feel this is something our Church should undertake?

You would be interested in purchasing a plaque on our Memorial Garden Stone (est \$500.00) now or in the future?

You have more questions—list them please

Return to Nancy Oliviero noliviero@aol.com or just call so we can talk 732-571-3378---

Recycling 4 Cash

We can earn \$\$\$ collecting empty inkjets, laser toners and cell phones!!

Bring in cartridges from home, family and friends or ask to place a box at work.

We have set up the collection box downstairs by the copier

Help save the environment one cartridge at a time!!!

Hot weather days are here!! Did you get any summertime cosmetics or articles such as bug spray ect. Please pick up an Avon catalog on the Gleaner table down stairs. Call in your order to the Avon representative or give to any gleaner. We will pick up your order and deliver it to you. The gleaners will get 10% from any order year round for our Avon fundraiser. Thank you in advance for your support.

The Gleaners

Beach Blanket Bible Study

If it's July, it's time for David Cotton's annual Bible Study on the beach in Ocean Grove. This summer the theme is "The Prayers of Jesus." What can we learn about prayer by examining the prayers Jesus prayed while on earth? Learn how to communicate with God in prayer Tuesdays in July...the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th from 7:00 to 8:00 on the beach just south of the Fishing Pier.

Bring your Bible, a chair, and a jacket. Insect repellent is often useful!

HELP NEEDED THIS SUMMER

Carol-Jeanne Turk is moving this summer after 33 years in an apartment. Lots of help is needed to help her clean out her attic and apartment and pack everything up to be stored for 3 years. Lost of work for many hands if you are willing and able. **Especially the last 2 Weeks in August!!!**

She will be gone from July 25 until August 10. There is lots of attic emptying to be done before that and furniture to be stored after that.

If you are willing to help, please call her at 732-542-8060 or e-mail her at nanaturk@hotmail.com.

Thank you very much.

JOIN US FOR A NITE OF CHRISTIAN RECREATION

At the Lakewood Blue Claws First Energy Park on MONDAY JULY 28 at 7pm

Prices are \$9.00 for 13years to 55 years old and \$6.50 for 5-12 years old 0-5 FREE

Also Kids EAT FREE ON MONDAY NITE at Game hotdog, chips and drink

RSVP to tammyweiss@optonline.net or see any deacon to reserve your seat by 7/20/08

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

July Birthdays

6 Robert Nuckle
9 Sue Schmardel
9 Megan Tursi
10 John Waldron V
13 Patty Gallup
14 Doris Woolley
16 Karen Schwartz

19 Carl Fritsche
20 Mitchell Sweeney
21 Mike Tursi
22 Betsy Fee
25 Joanne Cotton
28 Tim McGuire
31 Danny Mullan (father)