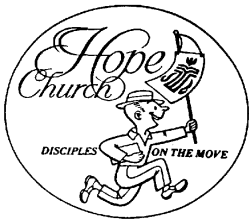


HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
TINTON FALLS, NEW JERSEY



NOTES OF HOPE



A monthly publication to keep us informed.

October 2011

Edited 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

Passion and Calling

God gives everyone a calling. By that I mean that God places on the heart of every person, certainly every follower of Jesus, something they are passionate about in serving God. It may be music. It may be working at the Food Bank or with the homeless. It may be teaching in church school. It may be taking care of creation and encouraging others to do so. There are practically infinite ways to witness to God's love; each of us is called to at least one of them.

The church is a place where people's different callings can be identified, supported, explored, encouraged, and accomplished. It is a place where listening for God's call is an essential part of its work. Discipleship is not completed when we have invested an hour a week sitting in church. As fulfilling as that hour may be, we gather in worship in part for the purpose of receiving God's energy for our real work, which is what God has called us and is sending us to do in the world.

The Apostle Paul has several lists of these callings, which he calls gifts of the Spirit. They include preaching, teaching, prophesying, evangelizing, ministering, healing, interpreting, doing compassion, and so forth. "To each is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7), he says.

We need to ask ourselves **what manifestation of the Spirit for the common good has been given to each of us?**

It turns out there are many ways of teaching, evangelizing, healing, interpreting, and activating other gifts of the Spirit. You don't need to be officially ordained and given a specific title and have it be your full-time profession. Yet your calling can express itself within your paying job, as well as in your family life, or in school, shopping, or driving.

This calling does not have to be limited to the structure of the church. In other words, God doesn't call us to work just in those things for which the church has established groups and committees. Indeed, God's call doesn't always have to come through the session for authorization. It is more and more often the case that God is calling people to work in areas that sessions and committees simply haven't thought of. Sometimes the church hierarchy has thought of them... and wants nothing to do with them! Most churches are designed to do mission yesterday. God is calling us to serve *today*.

Sessions often need to find a way to get out of the way of what God is doing in, with, and among the people. At best, church leaders discern and enthusiastically support what the Spirit is gifting people to accomplish. It turns out that God is not really confined by our structures, institutions, and organizations. Maybe it would be even more fruitful to structure our organizations according to what God is calling people to do, rather than assuming that God will only call people to do what we have a committee for....

One way of identifying the particular "manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" that has been given to you is by discerning where the passion is in your life. Where is the energy, the juice? What makes life flow through you? What gives your heart joy? What are you unusually good at?

Then, having identified this passion, you ask where and how can that passion meet the real needs of the world? How can this be used to serve God and others? How can this "manifestation of the Spirit" in us be used "for the common good"? It is not enough to have a passion and follow it; a true manifestation of the Spirit also does some good for others, especially those in need.

This happens in a wide variety of ways, from someone who makes their passion their profession, to someone who finds ways of bringing their passion into the various elements of their life.

I think that church can be a place where we share these "manifestations of the Spirit for the common good." We encourage each other, learn from each other, connect with and support each other. I am sure there are things members of Hope Church are doing in their world that we in the church don't know much about. We may not even think of these things as aspects of our calling from God! But often they are.

But mostly I hope we open ourselves to the new things God is calling us to do. Where is your passion, your "manifestation of the Spirit"? How can it be used "for the common good" in the church and in the world?

Paul

The Green Stole

I am getting the occasional query about the green stole that I wear in worship. It was a gift for my 25th ordination anniversary. The two figures are a) a lion, which is the traditional symbol for the Gospel of Mark, based on the 4 "living creatures" in Ezekiel and Revelation, and b) a wild goose, which is an ancient Celtic Christian symbol for the Holy Spirit, from an illustration in the Book of Kells, an illuminated Bible from the Dark Ages.

Adult Bible Study

I would like to start a Bible Study class for adults. It will be meeting after church and coffee hour, weekly, starting on October 9. We will be studying the Book of Romans, using probably the Kerygma Program. The first gathering will be a general review of Bible study basics, just to see where you are. Please join me for this!

Paul+

Adopt A Highway cleanup is here again. We are scheduled for Oct. 30, at 1:00 in the church parking lot. No mischief allowed but if you feel the need to dress up, do your best. Please plan to help us to serve our community. Bags, picks, and vests are provided. If you have work gloves please bring them. Be certain that any outfits match your orange vest. Sign up sheet is on the desk in the narthex. Any questions please see Fred Bauch.

Sunday School Update

Sunday School began this year with a Peacemaking Event starting in our Prayer Garden. Toddlers through grade six students experienced welcoming the peace of the Lord into our hearts, and then sharing that peace as we relate to our family members, schoolmates, and in wider circles in the community.

Our nursery class teachers are Jean Buckley and Joyce Waldron. They would welcome assistance from interested members who might like to help out once a month as they bring the Good News to our lively toddler through grade one children.

Kathy Heller and Nancy Massa are teaching the students in Grades 2 through 6, and are pleased to welcome Erica Andresen to their team. Thank you, Erica, for sharing your talents. Shortly, our second graders, Kyle, Tyler, and Mason will be receiving their Bibles. Do you still have the Bible you received from your church as a child? We'd like you to share your memory with us.

You may have noticed this summer that our students are taking turns carrying the Bible to the Communion Table before our worship service begins. On World Communion Sunday, the children will share a pantomime during the Prayer of Confession. Making the children a meaningful and authentic part of the worship experience is one way that we as a congregation can fulfill the vows we made at their baptisms.

Questions about Sunday School? Please contact Kathy Heller.

October Birthdays

- 7 Jennifer Rose Morris
- 11 *Nancy and Jim Oliviero wedding anniversary (1982)*
- 14 Michael Shephard
- 16 Lynda Hicken
- 16 Nathaniel Brown
- 18 Fred Morris
- 20 Kelly Van Pelt
- 24 Andrew Tibert
- 30 Charles Butler