



APRIL 2013

discover... connections
faith
purpose
belonging
family
discover...



Hope Presbyterian Church
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Message from the Pastor

Life's Chief End

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

Q. 1. What is the chief end of [human life]?

A. [The] chief end [of human life] is to glorify God, and to enjoy [God] forever.

That's the famous first question of the Shorter Catechism. I love it because it contradicts all the negative stereotypes about the Puritans who produced it. A group of people who became infamous for their sour disposition, nevertheless placed at the beginning of their primary catechism the affirmation that human beings are placed on the earth for the purpose of glorifying and *enjoying* God. These are people with the well-deserved reputation for not enjoying, or allowing anyone else to enjoy, anything. Yet here they have the enjoyment of God as the chief purpose or goal of human life.

The enjoyment of God is paired with the glorification of God. We glorify God by attributing to God all the good things in creation, by praising and worshiping God according to God's instructions, and by thanking God for all the gifts we have received and continue to receive. Implicitly, this means not giving this glory to ourselves or to anyone else, but the recognition that God is the Source and Goal of all that is, and that ultimately God is good and triumphs over all evil.

Any glory, praise, or thanksgiving that stops with us is misplaced. The goodness and grace in the world comes from the One from whom all blessings flow, the One who creates, redeems, and sustains the universe. We are blessed to be vessels and channels of this benevolence, which we become when we consciously give the glory to God.

God places us on the earth as the creatures who articulate in words and freedom the blessings God gives to all creation. We thank and praise God on behalf of all of life, adding our voices to theirs. We represent and speak for the trees and the animals, the micro-organisms and the fish, the birds and the rocks, the gases and the waters. And we shape our lives in thankfulness according to the Law of God that we live in love and responsibility for each other.

Jesus Christ, God's living Word, comes into the world as our example and pioneer, in the sense of ground-breaking leader. He shows us the perfect response of obedience to God in which true freedom is realized, in his love, generosity, forgiveness, justice, and peace. He finally reveals love in its fullness by giving his life for us on the cross, and to us in the resurrection. By the indwelling power of his Holy Spirit, Christ infuses us with the power to glorify God in praise and thanksgiving.

And this glorification of God is not a burden because it is balanced by the enjoyment of God. It is to experience the joy God enables our hearts to feel, a joy that comes with the knowledge of life's miraculous nature and its inexorable direction in and towards goodness. The catechism affirms nothing so much as the profound truth that we, human beings, are made for joy. We are fulfilling our purpose when we experience together the joy of the Lord.

It is good to glorify God. But that is not quite enough. God also wants our

"We are fulfilling our purpose when we experience together the joy of the Lord."

delight, our laughter, our glee, and our bliss. God intends that life be fun. Into the ear of every newborn, God whispers one invitation: "Come dance with me!"

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Unfortunately, that invitation is usually quickly forgotten, as people slog their way through a world shattered by their own sin: mainly fear, anger, and pride. The Bible is the story of this conversation between the Creator and the creatures, with God always calling us out of the muck in which we have mired ourselves, and with the humans repeatedly in more and more interesting and spectacular ways not getting it.

As we learned last time in our discussion of the first affirmation of the Barmen Declaration, Jesus Christ is the Word of God to whom the Scriptures witness. He is the rule, the standard, and the model for glorifying and enjoying God. By his cross and resurrection he withstands the consequences of our sin, and our sin itself, and demonstrates that not only does it not have to be this way, it really *isn't* this way. God's intention for

human life is the Kingdom he proclaimed and gathered, and the violence and death we suffer are not the end. Our true life is resurrection, the completion of our joy.

The next few questions of the catechism focus on the nature and character of God as the giver and sustainer of life whose will cannot ultimately be opposed. "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." "The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power..., and all very good." "God created [human beings] male and female, after [God's] own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness." "God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions." "When God created [human beings], he entered into a covenant of life with [them]."

What's not to glorify? What's not to enjoy?

In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God calls us and empowers us to let go of our anxiety, fear, anger, shame, and greed, and the consuming, condemning, wasting, hoarding, and killing practices they spawn. Instead we are to glorify God in our delight, and enjoy God in our gratitude, praise, and obedience.

--Paul+



**Sunday, May 19, 7:00 P.M.
Hope Church Music Department
Presents**

**Contemporary Christian Music
of the Jersey Shore**

- Choral & Instrumental Music
 - Solo & Small Ensemble
- Contemporary Praise Band Music
 - Handbell Choir

Local composers include: Carl Fritsche,
Fred Morris, Nancy Scharf, Charles Clark,
Tim Broege, Steven Russell.



Resurrection Vigil

March 30, 8:00PM



Excerpts from the [*Companion to the Book of Common Worship*](#) (Geneva Press, 2003, 135-136)

- *The service begins in the darkness of night. In kindling new fire and lighting the paschal candle, we are reminded that Christ came as a light shining in darkness (John 1:5).*
- *The second part of the vigil consists of a series of readings from the Old and New Testaments. These readings provide a panoramic view of what God has done for humanity.*
- *In the earliest years of the Christian church, baptisms commonly took place at the vigil. For in baptism we die to sin and are raised to life. Baptism unites believers to Christ's death and resurrection.*

The **Resurrection Vigil** was held Saturday evening before Easter and began in the Prayer Garden. Following readings in the darkness using flashlights, Rev. Rack lit the **Paschal or Christ Candle**. People lit their own candles from the Christ Candle and proceeded around the church building to the front steps. A psalm was read and a hymn sung and the people moved into the brightly lit sanctuary. There were readings from Genesis, Ezekiel and Luke, followed by the baptisms of *Dean Morgan and Avery Morgan*. The people departed in joy to resume the service on Easter Morning!

Easter Sunday

March 31, 9:30AM



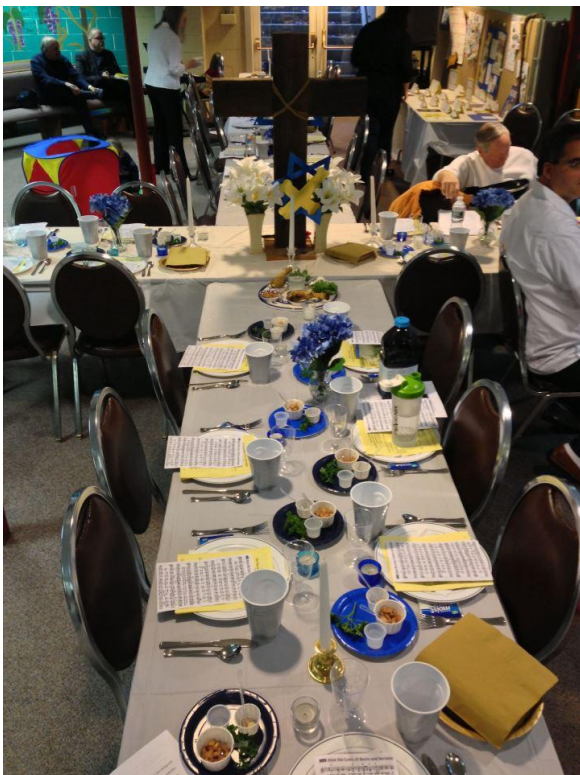
Praise Team



Bell Choir



It was a great Seder!



The lighting of the candles, the pouring of the grape juice, the breaking of the matzo, the knowledge that we are released from bondage and the joyful laughter of friends sharing a meal- all of these elements were present when Hope Presbyterian Church celebrated a Passover Seder Thursday night, March 28 as we recognized the roots of our faith in the Jewish tradition. A traditional Jewish meal served on Passover, the Seder uses elements of the meal to remember and celebrate the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, breaking the bonds of slavery. Everything — the words, the food, the drink, the order — has special meaning and significance. About 35 members and guests attended to share the delicious meal, hear the story of the Passover, and participate in group singing. It was a wonderful evening!



"Flower Power is Here" but Leaving Soon

**The deadline for ordering flowers from Flower Power is April 26th
So start planning your garden and place that order!**

So simple so easy to not only brighten up your garden but to Help Hope by purchasing **high quality bulbs for spring planting**. **Click on the link below to order from Flower Power now.** Please forward the **Flower Power** link to everyone on your email list--remember 50% of all sales go to Hope Church. You'll be helping Hope help others and continue our stewardship to our Church and the community.

If you don't have email, see Fred Bauch for ordering information. 732-542-3733

http://www.flowerpowerfundraising.com/campaign?campaign_id=13382

If you don't have a garden you may want to try a few pots on the patio, or deck. Use your imagination and let's make this a real successful fundraiser for Hope and our community.



***Dance, then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he***

**April 27, 10:00AM
Eatontown Firehouse, Broad St.
\$10 donation, Pay at the door!**

Featuring Paul Lampa, Michelle Smith, Joanna Shrearer, Nancy Eccles, and Deeanna D'Alterio and DJ NEGRO LUIS!!!!

Upcoming Events

- The first Saturday of each month is the Men's Breakfast in the John Calvin Room. **April 6, 8:00AM**
- Zumbathon, Eatontown Firehouse, **April 27, 10:00AM**
- Healing Service in the Sanctuary **April 30, 7:00PM**
- Prayer Service **May 7, 7:00PM**
- Spring Music Concert **May 19 7:00PM**

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04-01-2013

APRIL FOOLS!

	April
2	Jolie Evens
3	Chris Scheidt
3	Barbara Patterson
5	Nancy Massa
6	Dee Miller
7	Margaret Light
8	Joan Trafford
12	Dorothy Lafaire
17	Natashia Brown
19	Eddie Baffige
21	Samantha Evans
26	Melissa Emmons
27	Billy McCabe



	May
1	Linda Morgan
4	Kathy Heller
7	Emma Rivera
9	Mary Harris
11	Conor Mullan
13	Virginia Lippincott
13	Tyler Shephard
13	Fred Bauch
16	Joyce Waldron
19	Willie Brown
28	Mary Tursi
29	Tess Nielsen
30	George Jones
30	Jason Evans