



Hope Presbyterian Church  
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Worship Service 9:00AM, Sunday

## Message from the Pastor

Rev. Paul Rack

### Do No Harm.

One of the vows that physicians take is, "First, do no harm."

#### 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

It sounds simple. These words could also be embraced by everyone. As a bare minimum wouldn't it be great if we could get through life without doing any harm? If you can't be a great hero, accomplishing amazing, powerful things, at least try to do no harm. Surely we could handle that?

But the sad fact of human life is that *we do harm*. All the time. We are not conscious of a lot, if any, of the harm we are doing. When we act out of our ego, motivated by selfishness, fear, anger, desire, and even reason, we slash our way through the world and we hurt people and other things in the process. Even when we think we are doing good, if we are motivated by self-interest, we very often do harm.

No one sets out to do harm. Excepting perhaps some of the mentally ill, everyone imagines that their plan for every day is beneficial in the long run. I'm sure that Nazis working at Auschwitz told themselves they were not doing any harm, that torturing and murdering Jews and others was all for the greater good. The guys doing the waterboarding at Guantanamo, men working mountaintop-removal coal mines, investors putting their money into Exxon or Lockheed Martin, even farmers burning the Amazon to make room for palm oil plantations... they all think what they are doing is in some sense good, at least for themselves or their people. They don't see the harm. If they are doing any damage at all, they rationalize that it is temporary and surely outweighed by the benefits. To them.

Spirituality is becoming conscious, waking up, coming to self-awareness. Self-awareness involves consciousness of the wider world and other people. It has to do with coming to know that we are all connected to each other. Other people are *real*. They have the same feelings, dreams, voices, needs, joys, and desires that we do. The more self-aware we become, the more our separations and differences dissolve, and we see that we are all one.

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*"They don't see the harm."*

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Jesus Christ is the One who embodies the fullness of our true humanity. He is infinitely self-aware, and recognizes his oneness with all. Indeed, he is therefore also the incarnation of the God who breathed existence into *everything*. He shows us that self-awareness means identification with *everyone*. The pain of another is *our* pain. The joy of another is *our* joy.

Crucified, Jesus bears the consequences of our unawareness. He is viciously harmed, and identifies with all the degraded, lynched, sacrificed, exploited, sold, devalued, disinherited, and forgotten. He absorbs the violence projected into the world by our egocentricity... and he neutralizes it. For it is based on the lie of our separation and independence. And he transmutes that experience into resurrection: which is an opening into a completely new kind of life.

We Presbyterians don't use crucifixes. Our crosses are always empty as a witness to the resurrection. I understand that. Truth be told, crucifixes still kind of creep me out. But they also convey a side of the faith that we tend to miss: God's identification with the lynched.

In the crucifix we are shocked into facing the harm we are doing in the world. "*I crucified thee,*" is how one spiritual song puts it. Jesus is our victim, the One we choose to torture and kill to assuage our fears and maintain our power. He represents every soul we have pressed into the service of our agenda. He represents the people we have broken and used, whose land and labor we steal, whose tears and blood have fed our gluttony, greed, and lust. He represents a good creation pinned to a board and dissected, disassembled, its resources extracted and squandered... the burning rain forests, the tortured and slaughtered animals, the wrecked atmosphere... it's all there represented in the broken figure nailed to the wood of the cross.

Perhaps the point is to shock us into consciousness and awareness of the harm we are doing. We are to identify with the innocent victim, with all those broken by our egocentric desire, and to change our ways of thinking and acting. An injunction to "do no harm" makes no sense until we realize the damage our actions are doing already. And that doesn't get through to us until we put ourselves in the position of our victims. To identify with them is to identify with Jesus Christ; it is to identify with God. It is finally to realize a oneness with all things.

That is basically an application of Jesus' Golden Rule. It asks us not to do to another what we would not want done to ourselves. That is the definition of "harm."

Because in Christ the division between us and "others" breaks down. In him we are all one. What we do to others we ultimately do to ourselves.

Maybe this Lent it would help if we focused on doing, well, *less* harm. We could recognize, admit, and finally face the consequences of our actions in the lives of others, and find ways to minimize the damage. We could abstain from doing harm, as much as we can. When doing harm seems unavoidable we could name it and confess it. We could look for other ways. We could make amends for the harm we have done and continue to do.

We could stand in solidarity with the harmed, and witness to the triumph of Jesus Christ, by sharing and taking upon ourselves the harm others are experiencing, especially as a result of our sinful behavior. We could be beacons of love and acceptance, healing and peace, in our embrace of harmed people, and a harmed Earth, in the name of the Lord.

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#### **Daily Meditation from Rev. Rack**

Rev. Rack distributes a Daily Meditation e-mail to those who want to receive it. It includes a spiritual quote, a note about a holy person for the day, a calendar, and guides for reading through the Bible. Anyone interested in receiving it should send an e-mail to [paulrack@optonline.net](mailto:paulrack@optonline.net).



# Be the Church 2020

Photography: Inez Brown

By Nancy Massa

On February 23, Hope celebrated our worship service at Virginia's residence, Wardell Gardens, 524 Wardell Road, Tinton Falls. The road traveled in organizing this Be The Church is a beautiful example of how the Lord guides us and calls us to do His will.

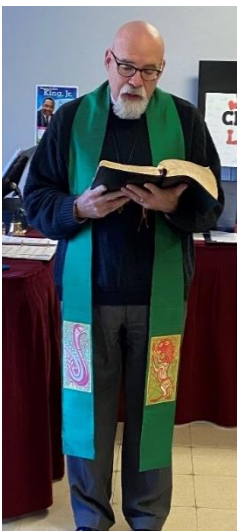
The Prayer Shawl Ministry is always reaching out to find new recipients of the gift of shawls and, since our dear Virginia is a bit too frail to attend our services anymore, Wardell Gardens came to mind as a perfect recipient for the shawls. An appointment was made with Nicky Taylor, the Recreation Director, to have a brief meeting and explain the shawls and their connection with the Lord.

During the meeting I brought up our concept of Be The Church and how we sometimes go into the community with our worship service and our music. Nicky reacted so positively that, on the spot, we picked two possible dates to present to Session to get approval and a 'best date' selection. The time slot that she offered was 9:30-10:30 on Sunday morning, which was perfect for both our minister and our music director to be present, because they both have another work commitment after Hope's service time. This worked flawlessly. Nicky joyfully said, 'I've been praying for some music to come to Wardell and here it is!' Prayers answered.

Session selected February 23. Preparation was extensive. Announcements were made in service and printed in the bulletin; Sunday School created cards to be given out that reminded the recipient that God Loves You; music selections were made and practiced for both vocal music and bells, emails were sent, signs were created and given to Wardell and put up on the church doors; and Hope was on board for a new Be The Church. Virginia was extremely excited and informed me that she already had her purple outfit picked out and she wanted to sit in a regular chair up front.

Bell tables and bells were packed up, transported by Dave and his well-used for church outings white truck. Helpers (ringers, singers and congregants) swarmed the setting up on-site and, voila, bells were ready to ring. Special thanks go to Laura Lam, who joined our Bell Choir about one month ago. To learn the ringing concept and practice 3 songs and perform 'on the road' is quite a feat, and we appreciate her stellar efforts. Carl brought his keyboard and his music expertise and had printed out words for the songs to be sung. Charlie and I brought my bass guitar, amp and other necessities, and Kathy and Paul had their worship readings and service prepared. Nicky had the room set up with tables and chairs and as the attendees started to enter the room, she provided more chairs, and then more chairs! With a close estimate on the number of celebrants, there were 40 Hope attendees and 10 residents from Wardell. What a joyful celebration of the Lord and each other.

Nicky profusely thanked us. 15 Prayer Shawls were gifted to the residents of Wardell Gardens, in total. Music, prayer and the Word touched so many hearts. Virginia gave a speech afterwards that thanked us all. It was a touching, uplifting, spiritual, and meaningful, experience. We may wish to visit Wardell again. Thank you, Lord.







# Virginia Lippincott









## An Evening of Praise Concert of original music written by Hope Music Director, Carl Fritsche

On **Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM** the Hope Music program will be presenting a concert of original music written by Hope Music Director, Carl Fritsche. Carl is a published composer of Christian Music, available through CCLI and OneLicense. In an average week, 100 churches somewhere in the world play a piece of music that he wrote, and his Christmas Cantata, "The Holy Child" has been translated into seven languages and has been performed all over the world. "The Annunciation/The Magnificat" from the cantata was recorded and released by the award-winning Norwegian Choir, Sola Fide.

Please come and join Carl, the Hope Praise Team, Bell Choir, Vocal Choir, and hopefully a Brass Choir in an evening of musical praise and worship.



## Springing into Action

By Kathy Heller

In another month we'll be refreshing the Doris Woolley Memorial Garden preparing for spring and summer, cutting back the grasses, trimming the catmint and lavender, and looking for new plantings to complete filling the circle. As you clean out your own home gardens, please consider sharing extra irises, hellebores, or grasses that have outgrown their spaces. If you have shade plants to spare, they would be appreciated as we renew and redesign the Prayer Garden. Deer resistant plants would be especially appreciated!

Looking for a way to use your time and talents to help Hope? Join our Garden Gang and work with Nancy Massa and me, or at your own convenience to plant, weed, and water as spring turns to summer. Let's be good stewards of Hope's gardens, keeping them healthy and beautiful!







# Christmas Eve Service

Photography: Inez Brown

December 24, 2019

When people come to attend Christmas Eve church services, they still want to hear the good news and the old story. They also want to sing Christmas carols. People want to be together and they are more reflective about life and family, it's the time of the year when we are all the ages we have ever been.

- Rev. Desmond Jagger-Parsons





# One Starry Night

By Carol-Jeanne Shaw

Photography: Inez Brown

Our yearly Christmas program, One Starry Night, was a success again. We had so very many helpers this year! The attendees went from station to station as if they were walking through Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth. The youth group was involved by being teachers at the stations. Everyone was dressed up in costumes appropriate for the time of Jesus' birth.

Each visitor that came to the event had to sign in at the Census table. Rebecca Strong and Nancy Oliviero took the census which consisted of the name, address and email of each person.



Carol-Jeanne Shaw and Jean Buckley were the Star Gazers. Their visitors learned about the star that the Wise Men followed to find the baby Jesus. Their craft was coloring stars.



Tyler Shephard assisted Leslie Shephard at the Inn where there was no room for the baby to be born. They helped their travelers color Hands that held notes of love for their families.



Adam Hayek played the King with Mary Harris, the Queen, at the palace. They taught the visitors that their treasures were not on this earth but up in heaven. They decorated treasure boxes.





Conner Shephard, Leah Miller, playing the part of Mary and Joseph, worked with Linda Morgan to help the attendees color wooden manger scenes to hang on their Christmas trees. They taught about the birth of the Christ Child.



Kerri Strong was one of the Wise Men and assisted Bob Shaw. The visitors at their station made crowns to wear. Their story was about the gifts of the Magi.

Then the visitors were led by our Centurions, Dee Miller and Steven Buckley, to our Christmas tree where David Harris and Kelly Colao explained why we use a Christmas tree and the meaning behind some of the ornaments.



The final stop was the back at the beginning where each child received a goodie bag of cookies and was thanked for coming. Inez Brown was our official photographer for the event. As usual, she did an outstanding job!

Check out the last pages of the newsletter for more Starry Night photos!





# Ordination and Installation of Officers

January 12, 2020

Within the community of the church, some are called to particular service as teaching elders, as ruling elders, and as deacons.

*There are varieties of gifts,  
but it is the same Spirit who gives them.  
There are different ways of serving God,  
but it is the same Lord who is served.*

1 Cor. 12:4-5

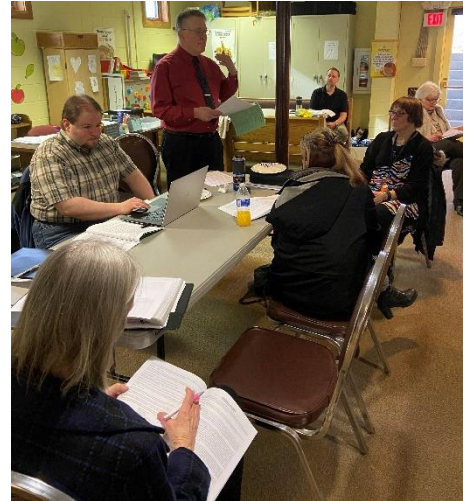




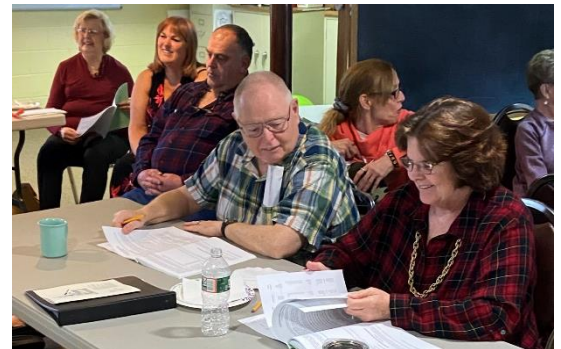


# Annual Congregation Meeting

February 2, 2020



Annual Reports were examined, programs discussed, changes explained and future plans explored.



Some did not find it too interesting...

And some had a good time playing!





# Deacon News

## EASTER CANDY

Hope's Easter candy fundraiser From Old Monmouth Candies is already here. You can get your order forms from Fred or just pick one up at the counter in the narthex. Orders are due on **March 22** but you can return them to Fred any time before that date. Make any checks out to Hope Presbyterian Church. Please check and re-check your orders. The candy will be delivered to the church on **March 29**, plenty of time before Easter.

Your support is appreciated.

Thanks from the Deacons of Hope



Life is  
better  
when  
you  
play  
ping  
pong

## PINGPONGATHON

Friday April 3rd from 6-9pm

Come join in the fun & family fellowship, no need to cook, as there will be hot dogs & refreshments on sale.

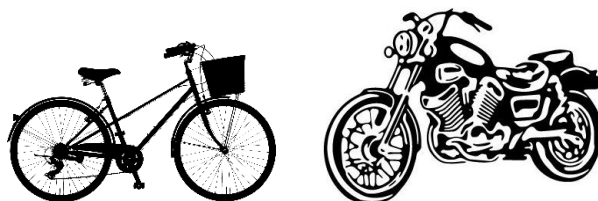
Try keeping the ping pong ball going continuously and break the record!! ....sponsored ticket prizes to be won.



## SPRING SALAD MIXUP

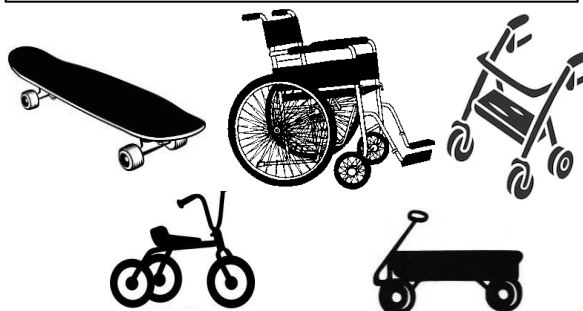
Sunday, May 17th

The delicious Deacon salad bar will be happening, so get your mason jars ready to be filled.



Watch the Bulletin for the  
**"WHEELS BLESSING"**

scheduled for May or early June.







# Youth Group

By Carol-Jeanne Shaw

Our Youth Group is small but lively! We have 4 kids who come regularly and 1 who comes as often as possible. We have just added a 6<sup>th</sup> who will also come as often as possible. We occasionally add a visitor which just adds to the fun and excitement.

We meet most Friday evenings at 6PM in the John Calvin Room. We always open with a prayer. The leaders, Carol-Jeanne and Bob Shaw are working at having the kids pray to open the evening but they aren't quite ready for that yet.

We originally set the age limits at the teen years but have now expanded that to include 10 year-olds. We have not put a cap on the age as of this time. We will let them fade out as their comfort level allows.

Our evening includes 45 minutes of Bible study then games. We learned about the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and are now studying the many parables of Jesus found in Matthew and Luke. We will also be learning about The Lord's Prayer.

Occasionally, we throw in an evening of just plain fun and games or a pizza party.

This Christmas season, we made gingerbread houses and some of them actually stayed together long enough to make it home! Next season, we may just decorate cookies!



They are really enjoying the time together and we are, too. We don't like to cancel but if only one child is coming or Bob and I are going to be away, we have to cancel.

Our fund raiser this season was Hope Presbyterian Church magnets. They were selling well but we still have quite a few left! Get a few for yourself. They are great for the fridge to hold shopping lists and other notes and for your car. Great advertising for the church. Put one on your mailbox, too! Help the Youth Group by getting a couple. The price is right. \$5



Making Valentine Cards



# Ladies' Book/Bible Study

by Kelly Colao

Our Ladies' Bible/Book Study Group is continuing to meet every other Sunday morning downstairs in the Calvin Room. We begin at about 10:20, and meet for about an hour. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, we are beginning a new discussion book: *7 Men and the Secret of Their Greatness*, by Eric Metaxas. Each of the chapters details the life of a different man, so each chapter is a stand-alone discussion. Similar to *7 Women* (which we just finished), Eric's style of writing is factual/historical, and yet not dry or boring at all! There is no before-class prep work or homework, except to read the chapter. And because of the author's own faith walk, each story is based on "how can we as followers of Jesus use this role model to deepen our relationship with the Lord"?

See the product description below to learn more:

What makes a person truly great? Is it only what they've done? Their work and accomplishments? Perhaps, as Eric Metaxas discusses in his newest volume *7 Men and the Secret of Their Greatness*, it's often what they don't do that makes them worthy of remembrance.

For instance, when the newly founded United States wanted to make George Washington its new king, he refused, or Jackie Robinson, one of the most talented baseball players of his time, surrendered his right to fight back against racists, or when Chuck Colson volunteered to go to prison when he didn't have to. These men and the four more who are profiled--Eric Liddell, John Paul II, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and William Wilberforce, all lived their lives for a greater purpose, laying down their comfort and ambitions to follow what they believed was right.

In *7 Men* you'll learn more about these remarkable men and the faith that guided each of them. In a day when character often takes a backseat, their stories will enrich your life, and show you what's possible when one person chooses to follow the path of humility.

All are welcome! Grab a cup of coffee and a coffee hour snack and join us at the table as we grow together on our faith journey and grow closer to God!





## Souper Bowl Sunday 2020

by Nancy Massa

Sunday School has registered with the youth organization, Souper Bowl of Caring, which is a national organization whose mission is to help those less fortunate receive food.

This year, on Feb. 2 (Souper Bowl Sunday) our Sunday School collected \$276 from our generous Hope congregation and it has been sent to support the local soup kitchen and food pantry at the 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church in Asbury Park. Three of our congregants volunteer there, so we are able to help them with our treasures, talents and time.

Thank you, Hope.

# THANK YOU!

## Hope Presbyterian Sunday School's 2020 Collection

raised:

# \$276

Thanks to your efforts this year, more dollars have been raised, more lives have been changed and the nation has seen the impact of people working together to help those in need. Thank you for working to transform the time around the Super Bowl into the nation's largest celebration of giving and serving.



February 2, 2020

## And Super Bowl Sunday 2020

Steven and Jean Buckley hosted a Super Bowl Party in Ocean Grove! A great game and great Fellowship.





# Photographic Compendium



Prayer shawl for Minera







In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken Luke 2:1



So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary Luke 2:4,5a



"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." Matthew 2:2







The census that was ordered by Caesar Augustus was the first of its kind. It was done because the Roman government wanted to make sure that everyone in the Empire was paying their taxes correctly.



...there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7



she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger Luke 2:7







When they (the Magi) saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Matthew 2:10,11





