

# Doorway to Hope

The Newsletter of Hope Church, P.C.A.

Our Vision: Training People for L.I.F.E

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## Forever Safe

I think it was Benjamin Franklin who once remarked, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” A cheery way to begin a newsletter as the tax deadline approaches, I know. However, the gospel requires us to add a third item to Franklin’s list: Heaven. We could call it the “new creation” or “our full salvation.” Whatever you want to call it, Jesus tells us that eternal life is so secure that even the persecuted should rejoice because they have an untouchable reward in heaven (Matthew 5:12-13). Therefore, we are safe even if we lose our reputation, our belongings and maybe even our lives because our eternal reward is **certain**.

The New Testament says the same thing elsewhere. Peter comments that our eternal future is being guarded through faith by God for us (1 Peter 1:5). Paul boldly proclaims that nothing in all of creation can separate us from God’s love in Christ (Romans 8:31-37). “He who began a good work in you will complete it on the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6). In a world where nothing is certain, we are secure in Christ. You and I are in the midst of a journey to heaven’s shore, where you are guaranteed safe passage from the beginning. Do you believe this?

The problem for you and me is that we live in the present and we do not always feel safe. Thus I want to

argue that we need to use true doctrine to combat our feelings. Our feelings are much like a New York winter. It can be 70° and sunny and all is right with our world one moment and then we wake up and there are two feet of snow on the ground. We feel awe and wonder at God’s presence with us on Sunday morning and then we screw up later that day and go to bed defeated, certain of our uncertainty.

Do you know how to use the blessings of the Gospel to navigate the trials and storms of this life? I

should re-phrase the question. Do you know enough true Biblical doctrine to withstand the inevitable storms of difficulty that will come your way? A pastor once wrote, “Knowledge of biblical doctrine is

to the soul as an anchor to the ship, that holds it steady in the midst of the rolling waves of error, or the violent winds of persecution.”

One of the most comforting doctrines for us in the midst of storms is the perseverance of the saints. It is one of the many blessings given to us in the Gospel of Christ. Here’s how the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) describes it:



They, whom God has accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall **certainly** persevere to the end, and be eternally saved. This perseverance of the saints depends not on their own free will but upon the immutability [can’t

*(Continued on page 2)*

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change] of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy [power] of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all of this arises **certainty**...

The WCF is simply rephrasing what Jesus has promised us in John 10:28-29, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." Safe.



It is this kind of certainty in the Gospel that allowed Samuel Rutherford, after losing his wife to illness to write this to a friend:

When you come to the other side of the water, and have set down your foot on the shore of glorious eternity, and look back again to the waters and to your wearisome journey, and shall see, in that clear glass of endless glory, nearer to the bottom of God's wisdom, you shall be forced to say, "If God had done otherwise with me than He has done, I would never have come to enjoy this crown of glory."

Consider this. Right now, regardless of your feelings, your past and present failings to keep God's law out of love for Him, you are safe in Christ. It's a certainty that doesn't depend on you but on Jesus. Remember the Israelites crossing the Red Sea on dry land with walls of water on either side? Surely there were those walking along saying, "God is amazing." And there had to be others looking at the miracle freaking out thinking, "I am doomed!" Yet both were safe because of the One protecting, guiding and leading them.

Rutherford, in counseling a fellow sufferer, says, "If God had brought me any other way, I would not make it to heaven." Biblical doctrine was an anchor for his soul through doubt, grief, fear and frustration. Something as simple as Jesus' beatitude, "Blessed are the persecuted for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," is a comfort and an invitation to better know the One who died and rose again to make you safe in Him.



### Turner Family Continues to Grow

Steve and Pat Turner's oldest son, Josh, lives in Kalispell, Montana with his wife Jane and their seven children. They are going through the process of adopting two children from China. Josh and Jane and three of their children will be flying to China in April to pick up Wen Ye, age 18 months and Lian Grace, age 10. "Our children are very excited. They're really looking forward to it" said Jane. **Congratulations, Steve and Pat, on your new grandchildren!**~ (Photo courtesy Daily Inter Lake)

### Why is Hope Church Hosting New York State Presbytery in May?

By Pastor Nate



[New PCA Logo  
Adopted in 2016]

For those who do not have a Presbyterian background and are new to the PCA (Presbyterian Church in America) it sounds like we are speaking a foreign language. What is a presbytery? Why do we use these words? They come from the Scriptures.

The word Presbyterian comes from the Greek word, *'presbyteros,'* usually translated as 'elder' in your English Bibles (see Acts 11:30; 14:23; 1 Tim. 5:17,19; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1,5). One of the distinctives of our denomination is that each local church is under the oversight and care of elders, who submit to our Lord and King, Jesus Christ. At Hope Church, the elders currently serving are Jeff Butler and John Van Voorhis (ruling elders), and Nate Thompson (teaching elder).

Another distinctive of a Presbyterian church is our connectedness to other local churches. Hope Church is bound in relationship with the other PCA churches in the New York State Presbytery. A Presbytery is made up of all the teaching elders and their churches in a particular geographic region. For us it is New York State Presbytery which stretches from Buffalo and Rochester out west, to Rock Tavern in the east and as far north as Canton. There are also four mission churches in Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse.

Why stay connected? Because we see the connectedness of early churches in Acts 15, working through a massive theological dispute. Some were arguing that non-Jews needed to be circumcised and keep God's law in order to receive God's gift of salvation. At the core of the argument was the question, "Is faith in Jesus enough to make us righteous or do we have to add something to His work?" The local church in Antioch could not solve the dispute on their own. So Paul and Barnabas were sent as representatives of their church in Antioch to consider the matter with the other elders and apostles in Jerusalem. Thus we see that in order for a local church to keep sound doctrine (don't make the good news bad news!) we need to be connected to other churches. The God of the Bible

does not allow Christians to live their lives alone. He puts us in a church family in a local community, which is also connected to other local churches through the Presbytery.

Why host New York State Presbytery? I'll list three reasons. #1 – Come and see and hear the gospel with the bigger church. We begin each Presbytery with a communion service, proclaiming the Lord's death and our love for one another in Christ. #2 – Come and see and hear for yourself what God is doing in other parts of our state. You and I are not alone in Ballston Spa as we seek to follow Christ. You will see men in the process of training for the ministry, an ordination exam and reports from other churches. This is all part of the way we guard the truth of the gospel and seek to make disciples of all nations here in our state. #3 – Hospitality is one of the ways we model and proclaim the gospel, seeking to welcome one another as we have been welcomed in Christ (Romans 15:7).

You are formally invited to join us at Hope Church as our guest on Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. Be on the lookout for more details in the future.

## Interact in Worship

### *The Blessedness of the Believer*

From Pastor John Newton

Many of us are familiar with John Newton's story as a former slave trader in the 1700's who was converted later in life and wrote the well-known hymn, "Amazing Grace." Newton eventually became a tender-hearted pastor who was skilled at applying the gospel to ordinary people. Today we have hundreds of letters written from him to various people in his church community. Below is a paraphrased excerpt from one of those letters called *The Blessedness of the Believer*. In the letter, Pastor Newton is trying to get us to see that Christian discipleship is a matter of learning how to live in light of the countless blessings given to us through faith in Christ, which can be experienced now! The word "blessedness" means an enjoyment of having God in our lives.

*The apostle [Paul] speaks of a blessedness, which belongs to every Christian. The Galatian Christians once had it and spoke of it. Paul reminds them that they lost it and warn us (Galatians 3). The Letter to the Galatians has led me to consider and wonder what blessings Christians can experience and lose awareness of in this lifetime. For this blessedness cannot be seen or understood by the natural man [the unbeliever]. It is not dependent on our outward circumstances. You can't find this blessedness through wealth and prosperity. Money simply cannot give us the same security and peace of mind as Gospel blessed-*

*ness. The wise cannot get it through the use of their superior intellect; nor will the simple miss out on it because of a lack of ability.*

*The state of true believers in Jesus Christ, compared with everyone else, is to be always blessed! If they are born from above and united to Jesus by faith, then they are delivered from condemnation and heirs of eternal life and are therefore declared happy in Him. Many Christians know that there are many blessings that will only be experienced in heaven, but miss out on what can be experienced on earth. We will consider this blessedness in five parts.*

*In the first place, it is possible for the believer to have a clear, well-grounded, habitual persuasion of being accepted in the Beloved. Christians can know that God will not throw us out! We can have an assurance of salvation, of our eternal security in Christ. It is not possible to be considered blessed unless we have this persuasion that we are permanently accepted by God in Jesus. To live in a state of suspense and uncertainty, regarding God's commitment to us is painful. But those who experience this blessing of assurance are those who see the power and grace and suitableness of Jesus, and the certainty and security of redemption in him. They are those who know how to rest everything on His person, His work and His*

*promise in the face of unbelief, sin and Satan. They believe the words of Romans 8:31-37, that nothing in all of creation can separate us from God's love.*

*Every Christian has access to this comfort because we have the same Gospel and the same promises as the apostle Paul. The power of the Holy Spirit's teaching does not weaken with time. But many stop short of this. They have a hope, but it comes from their feeling and their experience, rather than a spiritual understanding of the fullness of their Redeemer and His work. Therefore their peace fluctuates and changes like the weather. In order to grow in the confidence of your safety in Christ, may you be persuaded to pray earnestly passages like Ephesians 1:17-18 and 3:16-19. If you do, you will find a blessedness in Jesus that you have not yet known. As Jesus said, "Ask and you shall receive."*

To be continued...

Be encouraged to hear Christians of old read the same Scriptures as we do, and come to the same awe-struck conclusions that God doesn't take back his gift of salvation. "Grace has kept me safe thus far and Grace will lead me home."

—Pastor Nate

EASTER  
CHANGES EVERYTHING

# Interact in Worship

## Christ for Us (A Communion Hymn)

On merit not my own I stand;  
On doings which I have not done,  
Merit beyond what I can claim,  
Doings more perfect than my own.

Upon a life I have not lived,  
Upon a death I did not die,  
Another's life, another's death,  
I stake my whole eternity.

Not on the tears which I have shed;  
Not on the sorrows I have known,  
Another's tears, another's griefs,  
On them I rest, on them alone.

Jesus, O Son of God, I build  
On what Thy cross has done for me;  
There both my death and life I read,  
My guilt, my pardon there I see.

Lord, I believe; oh deal with me  
As one who has Thy word believed;  
I take the gift, Lord look on me  
As one who has Thy gift received.

I taste the love the gift contains,  
I clasp the pardon which it brings,  
And pass up to the living source  
Above, whence all this fullness springs.

Here at Thy feast, I grasp the pledge  
Which life eternal to me seals,  
Here in the bread and wine I read  
The grace and peace thy death reveals.

O fullness of the eternal grace,  
O wonders past all wondering!  
Here in the hall of love and song,  
We sing the praises of our King.

## Easter

*Break the box and shed thenard;  
Stop not now to count the cost;  
Hither bring pearl, opal, sard;  
Reck not what the poor have lost;  
Upon Christ throw all away  
Know ye, this is Easter Day.*

*Build His church and deck His shrine,  
Empty though it be on earth;  
Ye have kept your choicest wine—  
Let it flow for heavenly mirth;  
Pluck the harp and breathe the horn:  
Know ye not tis' Easter morn?*

*Gather gladness from the skies;  
Take a Lesson from the ground;  
Flowers do ope their heavenward eyes  
And a Spring-time joy have found;  
Earth throws winter's robes away,  
Decks herself for Easter Day*

*Beauty now for ashes wear,  
Perfumes for the garb of woe,  
Chaplets for disheveled hair,  
Dances for sad footsteps slow;  
Open wide your hears that they  
Let in joy this Easter Day.*

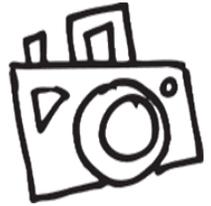
*Seek God's house in happy throng;  
Crowded let His table be;  
Mingle praises, prayer and song,  
Singing to the Trinity  
Henceforth let your souls always  
Make each morn an Easter Day.*

*Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)*

# Foster Loving Relationships



Snapshot on Children's Ministry  
By Melanie Combs



## **Winter , and talent, and Ten Com- mandments—oh my!**

Our children are having fun getting involved and sharing what they've learned with us. The third and fourth grade Sunday School class under the leadership of Jill Galarneau shared with the congregation they had learned the 10 Commandments! (See photo on page 7.) Many of the children participated in the Talent Show. There are many extra-curricular activities as well that the children of Hope Church have been involved in.

In the hopes that you can be even more involved in the children's lives when you are available, there will be a calendar grid posted on one of the bulletin boards. Our desire is that parents will write down some of the activities their children are involved in and church members can go cheer them on. These events could be sports, concerts, theatre, science fairs, 4H events, County Fair events, or just about anything. So if there's anything the children are doing that is something others could watch and cheer for, I'm asking parents to write it down on the calendar if they are willing. Many people are praying for your children. Now we can take the next step and encourage them in other ways, as well. Thank you.



**Glimpses of our Talent or "Not-So-Talent" Talent Show**

# Foster Loving Relationships



## **Bob and Phyllis Piester: Making a “Joyful Noise” to the Lord Together For Sixty-Six Years**

By Rae Whitehead

If you have sat in the northeast corner of the sanctuary lately, you probably have heard some great harmony! That’s where Bob and Phyllis Piester usually sit. When I told them how much I enjoyed their voices, they told me that they sing Barbershop. Bob has sung bass in the Racing City Chorus for thirty-two years! And he has been singing in the Dave Witford Joyous Sound for seventeen, ten of which have been with Phyllis. Joyous Sound began as a barbershop- type group for men, but when a need for tenors arose, Phyllis and three other women joined in. “I always sang soprano, so it was a big change to tenor!” she chuckles. Joyous Sound is a Christian group that sings in nursing homes, hospitals, and churches.



## **CAMP H.O.P.E.**

*Healthy Options for Play and Education*

**Camp H.O.P.E. News:** There was a meeting at the end of March to start planning for the 2017 summer reading camp, August 7-11. If you are interested in participating as an aide, a teacher, a crafter, an actor, please let Melanie Combs know. The Camp H.O.P.E. team will be letting the congregation know other ways in which to help as time progresses. Thank you.

**Our Camp H.O.P.E. theme this year is farming!**

Phyllis and Bob are real Ballstonians. They attended South Street Elementary School together. (South Street School is now a gym and dance studio located half a mile from Hope Church); and they graduated from Ballston High. (They attend a monthly luncheon of the “49-ERS” with classmates.) They were married in September of 1950, and as Bob says, they have had “sixty-six great years” together.

An emphasis on missions is important to the Piesters. Bob went on a missions trip to San Salvadore, and after retirement they both volunteered for Habitat for Humanity. Their work with Habitat began in 1992, when they helped with re-building after Hurricane Andrew, and they continued to work in Florida with Habitat during the next ten years.

The Piesters say that they feel “very comfortable and accepted” at Hope. We look forward to getting to know them better, and to hearing them sing!



## Foster Loving Relationships

### **From Ship to Shore: Maxwell Property Management Celebrates 25 Years on Dry Land**

(Excerpted from Ballston Journal On Line)



For many people who have lived in the Ballston Spa and Saratoga Springs area, the name Maxwell Property Management is a familiar one. The company's owner, Thompson Herrick, is spending this year celebrating 25 years of managing properties in and around the region.

Although Herrick says he is proud of the business he has created, his first love was the sea. As a young man, he joined the U.S. Merchant Marines, sailing the deep seas on large ships from 1978 to 1992.

Herrick started out as a deck hand and, by the time he retired from his post, he was the ship's Cargo Officer and held a Second Mate's License, equivalent in the Navy to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. During time, he became the ship's "Unrep Specialist," lingo for "underway replenishment." The big ships he sailed hauled the fuel for other large cargo ships, and it was his job to refuel them at sea.

After 14 years, Herrick left his life on the open seas, marrying and becoming a father in 1990. The idea of real estate investment and management peaked his interest and shortly after, he opened Maxwell Property Management as a one-man operation. His first property was a two-family home in Greenfield.

"I did everything from repairing broken toilets to mowing lawns," Herrick said.

By 1998, Herrick had obtained his broker's license and began making a name for himself in Saratoga County and the surrounding region.

Today, Maxwell Property Management writes more than 100 leases per year. He now uses outside contractors to repair plumbing and do the lawn maintenance.

Herrick views his 25th year in business as a major milestone and considers self-employment one of the most challenging, rewarding things he has ever done — although he does joke there have been times when his wife has threatened to send him back to sea.

As part of the 25-year anniversary celebration, Maxwell Property Management will donate a percentage of all monthly broker's commissions to [Shelters of Saratoga](#) (SOS). Herrick is particularly interested in helping SOS' Code Blue program, which gives the homeless a place to stay when temperatures dip below 32 degrees.

Herrick says he has no plans to retire any time soon. His strategic plan for the next ten years is to double the size of Maxwell Property Management before selling the company and sailing off into the sunset with his wife.

Until then, Herrick will continue to run his successful business on dry land.

**Congratulations, Thompson, on reaching this milestone!**

## Extend God's Hope

Dear Hope Church Friends,

It's been quite some time since I've written an update for your newsletter and so much has happened! Where do I even begin?! What a delight it has been to read about all of the activities and growth within your church. I am so thankful that, as I am giving tours to prospective families, I can promote you as a strong, Bible preaching, truth speaking, family embracing church. Please continue to let us know if there are prayer requests that we can lift up to the Lord on your behalf.

Before I move on to talking about Spa, you may notice that my name is different. God blessed me with my Prince Charming last year and we got married in November. His name is Jeremy, and he is a full time dad of his 3 lovely children: Tommy (13), Danny (11), and Kaitlyn (8) (see our picture). Our wedding was such a memorable experience, the sanctuary filled with current and former students, giving glory and honor to faithful and loving God.



During all of this personal change I am grateful to say that the school is continuing to do well, with God's guidance and mercy. We started the year with a new Spanish teacher, middle school math teacher, 3/4th grade teacher, teaching assistant, 1st grade teacher, and preschool teacher. A main prayer was that, with so many new faces, our mission and heartbeat wouldn't be lost. We serve a great and mighty God, and each individual has fit in so well. This year we also welcomed 15 new families! With the addition of our 8th grade, our middle school program is in full swing, preparing our students for high school. The addition of this grade has also brought health class, career development, increased Spanish, and the preparation for a mission's trip during spring break.

This past weekend we enjoyed our enrollment dinner as a school family. The goal was to help our current families, as well as any interested families, remember why Spa is an important investment. Our families were then given an opportunity to register for next year at a bit of a discounted, one night only rate. We are already well on our way for next school year, and have 2 new families already signed up! Praise the LORD!

Please pray for continued enrollment, that God would provide the continued finances for our current families, as well as direct new families to our door. Please also continue to pray that we would be ever mindful of His guiding hand. Our mission to make disciples through academic excellence, godly character, and a love of learning, is something we never want to lose. The final prayer request is our annual fundraising event coming up on April 8th (see invitation). Our hope is that the banquet room is filled with individuals ready for a fun evening of trivia and who are excited to be a part of supporting Christian education. Please be praying for financial favor, since we count on this as a large portion of our budget.

As always, thank you for your love and care. May the LORD bless you and keep you. May His face shine upon you and give you peace today.

Blessings,  
Mandy Kergel <><





Dear Hope friends –

Missions has been a significant part of my life from the time of my first trip, while in High School. Now I find myself teaching at my old high school, and having the opportunity to take a group of students on a missions trip. I think back to all God has done in my life and see so clearly how important and impactful that first trip was. It brings me great joy to look forward to seeing what God will do in and through these willing students.

Mekeel Christian Academy will be sending 14 students to the Dominican Republic April 18-25. I will be leading this group, and we will be working with a school and ministry there that Mekeel has been building a connection to over the last few years. Students will be engaged in various types of ministry, from working with students, to helping with manual labor, to visiting homes, to bringing food. I would greatly appreciate your prayers for myself, the students from Mekeel, and those we will interact with in the Dominican Republic.

Brian McKeon  
History & Bible Teacher  
Mekeel Christian Academy  
36-38 Sacandaga Rd, Scotia NY 12302

A special offering was received to help send Brian on his way, but please keep Brian and the students in your prayers.



- 4 Paul Miller
- 4 Miriam Emerson
- 10 Steve Brumagin
- 12 Anders Trestick
- 17 Catherine Childs
- 20 Steve Turner



- 13 Bill and Leona Digges
- 19 John and Sharon Milne
- 25 Fred and Ruth Richards

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

Colossians 3:23, NLT



### Church/School Work Day

Saturday, April 29th

9:00-1:00

Mark Your Calendar Now

### DOORWAY TO HOPE STAFF

DIRECTOR: LORD JESUS  
 TYPIST & LAYOUT: Sally Jenkins  
 EDITOR: Rae Whitehead  
 SUPPORT: All the Prayers of All of the Church family

### Congratulations to Our Graduates

Nicholas Cutler will be graduating from Liberty University in May majoring in human relations. He and his brother Brandon are planning a summer adventure hiking through Europe, after which Nick will be involved in a short-term ministry opportunity before furthering his education. Our prayers go with you, Nick!

Gretchen Skye Herrick will graduate from Dartmouth College in June. She has majored in Economics and Geography. Gretchen spent the past semester in Kenya, working with Young African Leaders Initiative. She hopes to continue working with this leadership training program in Kenya next year. We will be praying you on your way, Gretchen!

### BIRTHS

Congratulations to Patrick and Laura Childs at the birth of their new son, Lawson Isaiah Childs who was born at 12:53 p.m. on March 9<sup>th</sup> at Bellevue Hospital in Schenectady. Lawson weighed 8 lbs. 3 oz. and was 19 inches long and joins mom, dad, and his ten siblings in their home at Ballston Lake.



**Newsletter Deadline**

**Next Doorway to Hope Deadline is May 15th.**

April Calendar

Hope Church  
Presbyterian Church in America  
206 Greenfield Avenue  
Ballston Spa, NY 12020



**Maundy Thursday Service at Hope Church with Redeemer Reformed, Queensbury  
April 13th, 6:30 p.m.**

**Easter Sunday Fellowship Breakfast  
9:00 (No Sunday School)**

**Easter Sunday Worship at 10:00**