



Doorway to Hope

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

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

February 2015 · Vol. 18, No. 1

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What is Your Hope for Hope? By Ruling Elder Bob Hornlein for the Session

One of my observations is that every particular visible church changes periodically. Our church has changed its name three times. It has changed its denomination, its Vision Statement, the size of the congregation, style of worship, focus of ministry, and leadership. We, the members, in partnership with our sovereign Lord, are able to accomplish change.

We now stand at a unique cross-road, affording us the opportunity to influence what the new Hope Church will look like. We have asked a number of members during one-on-one conversations, "What should the future Hope Church look like?" Following is a summary of those comments.

Most members are hoping for a young pastor, able to relate well to young growing families and their needs. Most respondents were sensitive to the fact that we are an aging congregation that needs an infusion of young people, and then to minister to the developmental needs of their children. In fact, the spiritual and social nurturing of children is expected to be a major ministry focus of the church. The restoration of the Pioneer Girls and expansion of

the Christian Service Brigade programs were cited as a high priority.

Another major concern is that visitors will see us as warm and welcoming. Some members mentioned that is the way they felt about Hope when they first visited. Participation in small groups and Bible studies were also helpful to establish their strong durable friendships and aid bonding.

Establishing an evangelistic effort was seen as a primary need. A local service-oriented outreach ministry to a distinctive people group or need was suggested as useful to gain favorable recognition and to serve the community around us. Another hope for the future is a strong Missions program with more complete information on the missionaries that we support, as well as participation in summertime youth

mission trips.

The greatest diversity of opinion was the subject of worship music. It varied from a strong endorsement of the present form, to a large worship team using contemporary Christian songs. No one mentioned the need for a pianist, which surprised me.

An improved Website is also seen as an aid to our evangelistic effort. — specifically, a directory including pending activities, regularly scheduled events, and information suggesting vibrancy and life.

During the interviews, I asked for spontaneous responses, without pre-thought or preparation. Therefore, there are lots



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of subjects that were not considered. Hopefully they will be considered by you, the members. When our new pastor arrives, he will be expected to assume a huge, intimidating responsibility among strangers. We can encourage him by proactively dealing with these issues, giving him the assurance of our active support and cooperation.

We encourage you to include this need in your prayers, and to discuss and ponder this subject with each other; and in particular, how you plan to help make this vision a reality.

Hope Church Vision Statement

Hope Church ~ Training for LIFE

Learn God's Word

Interact in Worship

Foster Loving Relationships

Extend God's Hope

The Great God

A Responsive Reading from the Valley of Vision

O Fountain of all good, destroy in me every lofty thought,

Break pride in pieces and scatter it to the winds,

Annihilate each clinging shred of self-righteousness,

Implant in me true lowliness of spirit,

Abase me to self-loathing and self-abhorrence,

Open in me a fount of penitential tears,

Break me, then bind me up;

Thus will my heart be a prepared dwelling for my God;

Then can the Father take up his abode in me,

Then can the blessed Jesus come with healing in his touch,

Then can the Holy Spirit descend in sanctifying grace;

O Holy Trinity, three persons and one God, inhabit me, a temple consecrated to thy glory.

When thou art present, evil cannot abide;

In thy fellowship is fullness of joy,

Beneath thy smile is peace of conscience,

By thy side no fears disturb, no apprehensions banish rest of mind,

With thee my heart shall bloom with fragrance;

Make me meet, through repentance, for thine indwelling.

Nothing exceeds thy power,

Nothing is too great for thee to do,

Nothing is too good for thee to give.

Infinite is thy might, boundless thy love,

Limitless thy grace, glorious thy saving name.

I ask great things of a great God.

At our recent congregational meeting, Pastor Jim shared with us several books that he has recommended that the elders read, and, by implication, that we read, too. **Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace** is by Harvie Conn, who was professor of missions at Westminster Theological Seminary from 1972 to 1998. The premise of the book is that we are all missionaries to the world, and that evangelism is the coming together of word and deed; it is Show AND Tell! According to Amazon, the book is a “short, quick read.”

Another book that Jim recommends is Tim Keller's **Ministries of Mercy: The Call to the Jericho Road**. A review of the book states: “If there is one book that needs to be read by Reformed churches at this time it is Keller's **Ministries of Mercy**.” The reviewer feels that “compassion is the most credible apologetic” in our post-modern society and that Tim Keller's emphasis on works of mercy is timely.



The third book (series, actually) is the KNOW series, by Justin Holcomb. Jim especially recommended **Know the Creeds and Councils** and **Know the Heretics**. To quote from a review on Amazon of the former: “This accessible overview walks readers through centuries of creeds, councils, catechisms, and confessions—not with a dry focus on dates and places, but with an emphasis on the living tradition of Christian belief and why it matters for our lives today.” **Know the Heretics** is, according to a reviewer, a “clear and informed definition of orthodoxy and heresy” taken with a “strong dose of humility and restraint.”

If there's anyone out there in reader-land who would like to read any or all of these books, and review them for our next issue of "Doorway to Hope" please do so! That would delight the editor!! Our next issue's deadline will be March 15.



This story begins many moons ago when I began learning to update the Hope Church web page (www.hopechurch.us) with Ells Jenkins. I had done some limited web-page development at home and on my job using HTML, which stands for hyper-text-markup-language, a language once used by most web page browsers (e.g. Internet Explorer) to display and interact with users. I was familiar with 1990's era web pages, but times have changed. I learned that the Hope Church web page was hosted by www.powweb.com, which means the files used for the web page are stored on web servers owned or managed by powweb.com, including support for Hope Church emails (e.g. info@hopechurch.us). However, the web page content (web page text, fonts, images, files, and linking) are manipulated and controlled by Content Management Software (CMS), provided by a different company and web site. The CMS is a tool intended to make creation and updating of web pages much easier and simpler than manually editing HTML files.

The CMS used for the Hope Church web page was becoming outdated and did not support newer versions of Windows. At one point, the Hope Church web page was unable to be updated, necessitating immediate actions for switching to a different CMS and hosting service. Several options were explored, including the creation of a new web page from templates, the use of a web hosting service that provides up-to-date CMS tools and predefined web

pages, and the hiring a company to develop a new web page from scratch. The newest web pages are developed to support access from both desktop computers and mobile devices (e.g. resizable web pages able to be viewed on both platforms), while many complex features are provided that increase community exposure and impact that also reduce the skill level necessary to update and maintain the web page. After considering several options, a quick and relatively low-cost solution was made possible by using a third-party web service specifically designed for and catered to churches (i.e. www.ekkleisia360.com), which had been used by Grace Church (PCA) in Rochester NY. After review and approval by the session, a new web page effort was underway.

The Hope Church web page was developed in three basic steps: (1) select a theme from several available out-of-the-box designs; (2) provide the developer with a site map and logo based on the current Hope Church web site; and then (3) release the developer to transfer much of the content from the old Hope Church web site to the new web site. Several Hope Church members (Sally Jenkins, Rae Whitehead, Melanie Combs, Jeff Butler, and Jim Farinacci) assisted in selecting the theme, which took into consideration available features that may be utilized in the future. Luke Mailloux helped with creation of the logo before heading off to college. The developer transferred the content while making some adjust-

ments. After a few modifications to make the web site more current, the new web page went live in September 2014. Over several months, additional changes and development of instructions were generated to support web page updates by Hope Church members. The new web page currently supports posting of church activities (events), newsletters, and sermons. Further updates are planned to support Hope Church prayer chain member access to prayer list updates, a gallery for posting pictures from various events, a Blog, and possibly a Church Directory.

At this point, the web page is limited by the number of members willing and able to support on-going update of the web pages. Hope Church members that are even slightly skilled in using a computer and the internet, and are willing to regularly give their time to update parts of the web page, are encouraged to contact Sally Jenkins (sajenkins@hopechurch.us) or myself (webservant@hopechurch.us) to express interest in participating in this part of the Hope Church ministry.



Interact in Worship



Bird on the Bare Branch

By Jane Tyson Clement

Bird on the bare branch,
flinging your frail song
on the bleak air;
tenuous and brave—
like love in a bleak world,
and, like love,
pierced
with everlastingness!

O praise
that we too
may be struck through with light,
may shatter the barren cold
with pure melody
and sing
for Thy sake
till the hills are lit with love
and the deserts flower.

Cardinals in Winter

(Isaiah 1:18)

By Rae Whitehead

In the dead of winter (so it seems)
The sun's a-blaze on breasts
Of two male cardinals—
Blood-red
Crested
Black about the orange beaks.
What gift of color, Lord, you've given,
AND the eyes to see!
(Scarlet birds and
Pure
White
Snow.)

Stars

Author Unknown

If I hold up my hands
I know I could touch the stars tonight.
And listen, in the crackling-cold stillness
do you not hear faint singing?
See—far up—where the blue light glimmers,
are there not angel wings?
And, on the little winds,
the scent of summer meadows
here, on the winter ground,
stone-hard under our feet?

Do you not remember where you came from?
Faintly, oh so faintly I remember—
Stars and far distances and harmony
and a great realm of peace.
Awesome—not fearsome—
vast and unending—but home—
the meadows of Heaven
And one Shepherd.

Do you not remember?



Foster Loving Relationships

Spa Christian's Future is Bright

Mandy Klint <><
Administrator

We are about to finish up our second quarter of school and I can't believe how quickly it's flown by! As many of you have heard, God is directing us to add a 7th grade next year. This is an exciting step for us, and will involve a great deal of work, but it'll all be worth it. God is good and He's providing people to help us as we prepare to expand.

In addition to a 7th grade, God has also led us to add onto our preschool. Next year we will be offering full day options for our 4 year old program. Our pre-school teacher, Stacie Jaeger, is phenomenal and we are looking forward to seeing her program grow. Please pray with us as we take on these two large tasks.

We'd love to invite you to join our school for "Our Future is Bright" dinner on February 28th at New Life Fellowship. The dinner's purpose is to renew excitement for our school's future within our current school families, as well as provide a place for other families to come and learn about Spa. It isn't a promotional event, but one which we hope will generate passion and interest for our school. Do you know of someone who may be interested in Spa? Please invite them along. Invitations will be out during the first week of February.

Additionally, we'd like you to mark your calendars for our Spring Concert on May 8th, at Abundant Life Church. The theme for the concert is "To God be the Glory, Great Things He Has Done." The children will be singing and reciting Scripture that leads one to reflect on how great our God is to us.

As always, thank you for sharing your space with us. Your kindness and love is greatly appreciated. You're always welcome to stop by and see what's going on. May the Lord bless you today!



Snapshot on Children's Ministry
By Melanie Combs

Some Sunday School changes are coming soon.
Pat VanVoorhis will be teaching the 2-3 year olds.
Rae Whitehead will be teaching the PreK-1 group.

We will be sending flyers out to Camp Hope families reminding them of our Arctic Blast Reading Camp in August. Please be on the lookout for snowflakes, spray snow, and wintery decorations for us to use.

I will be setting up a table with some Reader's Theater discs to borrow. I will write a synopsis and guide for each. I'd like for you to sign them out on the paper at the table so people will know where they are. They are fun for any age. (Some content may be too heavy for the youngest of listeners.)



3	Eva Anderson
3	Jody Collinge
5	Rosemarie Harrington
6	Leslie Perkins
9	Hannah Mailloux
9	Marcia Gaige
11	Luke Mailloux
11	Leah Mailloux
15	Fred Richards
15	Rae Whitehead
22	John Milne
26	Dan Emerson

BIRTHS

David and Madaline Jenkins are the proud parents of a new daughter, Eleanor Lillian born on December 5th in Nashville, TN.



ENGAGEMENTS

Rebecca Whitehead to Jay Brunetto

Nicholas Cutler to Paige Hathaway, planning an August 15, 2015 wedding.

CONDOLENCES

We want to express our sympathy to the Trestick family in the loss of Stan's father, Stephen, on January 7, 2015.

Likewise our prayers go out to the Butler family in the loss of Jamie's Dad, Ernie Kunz, on January 29th at the age of 102.



**Newsletter
Deadline**

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

Foster Loving Relationships

The Pastoral Search Committee feels encouraged by what we see God doing in our work. We are encouraged by the support and encouragement that we have received from the congregation. It is exciting to talk to potential candidates about Hope Church! We love telling people that as a congregation we love Jesus and each other and we are committed to each other. We are encouraged by the applicants who have been interested in our pastoral position so far. To date we have received more than 30 applications and have been encouraged and challenged as we have listened to many sermons and spoken with several potential candidates about the work that God is doing in their lives.

Besides being encouraged, where is the Pastoral Search Committee in our process? We have reviewed all of the written information that we have received so far and have narrowed our list of potential candidates to several men who we think would be the best fit for Hope Church. Based on the review of the materials we have spent time listening to and watching recorded sermons from the strongest potential candidates to gain a better understanding of their personal preaching style. We have spoken with 3 of these potential candidates on the phone to get to know them better and to help them learn about us.

The next few months will be busy for us as a committee. We plan to have several more phone interviews in the

Pastoral Search Moves Forward with Encouragement

By Brandon Perkins, Chairman

coming weeks. We will also be reviewing several new applications that we have recently received. Our “short list” will become even shorter after these interviews and we will select candidates to meet in person. We will attend a worship service that they lead to hear them preach live and in-person. The next step will be for the Search Committee to select one candidate who will then visit us here at Hope Church to preach on a Sunday morning, get to know the area better, and meet with various church members. Assuming the visit is successful that candidate would then be presented to the congregation for a vote as our next pastor.

The timeframe for our work is still indeterminate. We are working steadily as a committee and are trying to complete our work in a short timeframe, but as with all things in life, we wait on the Lord’s timing. We hope to be complete with the process in the span of months, but will continue for as long as it takes to find the pastor that God is calling to Hope.

Please continue to pray for us as a committee. The next several months will be the most challenging for us as we will need to make the hard decisions that are needed to complete our work. Thanks for all of the encouragement that you, the congregation, have given us

*Please pray with us
and for us.*



Extend God's Hope

Taking on a semester abroad during my senior year was a risk that in the end, was well worth it. As a result, I have learned so much about God, myself, and life. **“For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you.” Jeremiah 29:11**

My start was rough and riveting. During the first couple of weeks in Lithuania, I was struggling with intense loneliness and helplessness. For starters, I had been in the company of some very intimidating people for an entire week, immediately following my arrival in Vilnius, one of the bigger cities in Lithuania. I mean, it was hard enough to get my weary jet-lagged body to move to multiple destinations. Once I made it to LCC, the international university where I would spend most of my time, I entered into the unknown, completely unprepared for my conditions. I didn't know that my living conditions would include living on a co-ed floor, or that I would have to share space with 4 other girls, with hardly any private space of my own. And within the first two weeks, I found that my plan to fulfill my internship requirement in order to graduate was backfiring on me. It seemed there was absolutely nothing to lean on, except myself, and I was so tired and frazzled from the changes. When I was finally told officially that an internship was not possible for me during that semester, I broke down mentally and emotionally. It shattered my sense of self, but the pieces were rearranged into something beautiful and wholesome and still very needy. I needed to reintegrate

God in my life, or maybe I really needed to open my eyes to what He was already doing. There He was, knocking on the door to my heart, and I was afraid to let Him back in, fearing that He would turn away after seeing the mess I had made of my life. (I was a great catastrophizer.) I didn't know how to trust Him. In fact, I hadn't really let myself trust Him since I was a child.

And so that was where I needed to start...

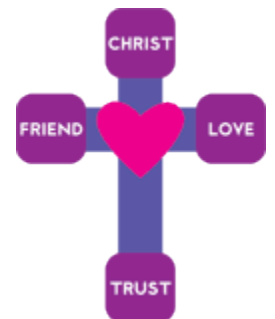
“Oh Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. Oh Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forever more.” Psalm 131

What are the characteristics of a child? Innocence, purity, simplicity, joy, laughter, just to name a few. Being a child means living free of cares and worries that are out of our control. I was not a child anymore, and I hadn't been since I was 6 years old. Many things were out of my control, and I can see that now. But back then, I thought I had to be responsible for everything and everyone in my life. I put weights on my shoulders that shouldn't have been carried by someone so young and new. Life quickly lost its newness for me. Grief, guilt, shame, and resentment replaced my joy and my will to play. In Lithuania, I re-discovered that newness and I realized that I was secretly waiting for

an opportunity to play. I had been for a very long time.

My roommates for the semester were four wonderful young women from Lithuania and Latvia. Each one brought something new and special to the roommate relationship. Sarune and I played guitar often, while Marija and I would get into deep conversations about psychology. Ieva and I supported each other through encouragement, while Vaida and I confided in each other about our faith journey. We were and still are a family, even though we are now distant from each other. But one of the most important things God taught me through these women was that life with Him was not meant to be all suffering, all baggage, or all pain. There was a time for all that hardship but there was also a time for joy, peace, and play. The next thing He taught me was that through the pain and the joy, we need each other, to weep and to laugh together.

When I first came to Lithuania, I was basically helpless. I didn't know where anything was, I didn't know the language, and I didn't know how to ask for help. The people were intimidating to me, and I didn't feel comfortable leaning on them. But I still had to eat, and I needed supplies to keep myself healthy. The first couple of days were the hardest, because

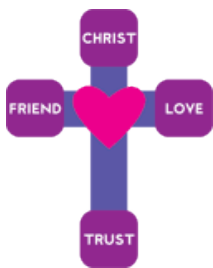


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I had no food. I had a couple apples and bars of chocolate from orientation, but they were gone fast. Then one day, my roommates invited me to the community kitchen for a meal. When I hesitated, they told me it was no trouble and that I needed to eat something substantial. I think that I agreed because they smiled genuinely when they spoke. When I ate with them at the table, in a circle, I felt ashamed of taking from them, of being a burden. They never treated me like one. They invited me again and again for the rest of the week. I learned to simply accept their gift and pushed away those voices telling me I owed them something. They never asked for anything back. Eventually, I confessed to them that I didn't know where the nearest grocery stores were and that was why I didn't have food for myself. Instead of giving me directions and sending me on my way, they offered to go with me to the store and walk me through the process. I was so relieved and encouraged by their offer. After they took me to the store a few times, I could remember where they were located and I was able to walk there on my own when I needed to. The very first time that I walked to the store on my own and bought groceries, I came back completely ecstatic; it was a small victory, but a victory nonetheless. The other American study abroads had a difficult time celebrating with me, because, well,

they were already traveling to other countries and living independently, and going to the store was really no big deal. But I still celebrated.



When I was back on my feet, getting food for myself and cooking in the kitchen, I decided to invite my roommates to a meal that we would first cook together. I loved to cook with them, to eat with them after it was all done, and to talk about our time together. The best part of it all was that I knew I wasn't obligated; I just wanted to give for the sake of giving. That was a beautiful thing to experience, and it changed how I looked at my relationship with God. I found that it wasn't about me giving back or making up for everything God did for me. It was more about me accepting the gift and putting all my trust in Him. God took care of me all through the semester, and He did it through people. It was an uncomfortable transition to go through, but I have learned to appreciate my growth and to appreciate the fact that I will always be growing. So will others. The wonderful thing about real relationships is that we all grow together.

But back to being a child and rediscovering how to play. I learned to have fun with my roommates, in a wonderfully childish innocent kind of way. I realized that my desire to play was what connected me to children so deeply. On many occasions, my roommates would do creative things like decorate the bathroom area, have pillow fights, or make paper airplanes to throw at each other. We even threw a balloon birthday surprise for my roommate Marija. At 6 am, we all started blowing up colorful balloons, maybe fifty of them, and we covered her bed. When she woke up, she was surrounded by many colorful balloons and began to groggily throw them at us. It was a

blast! I even attempted to skateboard in the hallway of our dorm floor. I was told that students at LCC do this when they are bored. I thought I would give it a try. I wasn't a great skater, but it was fun to be silly and laugh at my own mistakes for a change.

When I was able to take life a little less seriously, I started "training" myself to trust in God. This was a lot harder than it sounded. Basically, my goal was to respond to everything that happened during the semester by saying, "I trust you, God," even when I didn't fully trust Him yet. After some time, saying, "I trust you, God" led to thinking, "I trust you, God." Thinking eventually led to believing. I remember a few times I had gotten lost, in the woods and in the city, and I had felt afraid because I didn't know how to get back and I was alone. I began to walk steadily, repeating my training phrase, "I trust you, God," over and over again, sometimes alternating it with "I don't know where I am" and "I'm lost, God" and especially "Help me find my way home." The song, "Thy Word" came to mind, and I began to sing the lyrics: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way, still you're there right beside me. Nothing, will I fear as long as you are near. Please be near me to the end."

Needless to say, God got me home. He found me again, when I thought I was lost, and I know now that He will never leave me.

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



**Hope Church All Family Valentine Party
And Ziti Supper**

Saturday, February 14th at 5:30 p.m.

Bring a Dessert to Share

Group Games will follow

Please sign up in the foyer so that we know how much ziti to prepare.