



Doorway to Hope

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

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

February 2017 · Vol. 20, No. 1

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Corporate Worship Is War

Maybe you've been here. It is another Sunday morning. Everyone is in a lethargic rush to get out the door in a timely manner and then it happens. The bickering. The complaining. Accusations violently flung like arrows fully intending to draw blood. And then you have to walk through the doors of the church with raised blood pressure, wounded hearts, and a guilty conscience hidden behind a smiling face. The service ends with a kind word from our good God and Father and everyone piles back into the car. The next thing you hear are the sound of verbal swords once again being pulled out of their sheaths. Why are Sundays, "God's day of rest," so hard?

It is another Sunday morning. Bad news has been knocking on your doorstep this past week. And you know that coming to church means being asked the dreaded question, "How are you?" Some weeks it is easier to hide than to come sing and listen to yet another sermon. Why is it so difficult to come to and enjoy worship with God's people?

On yet another Sunday morning, you've come after an exhausting week at work. It feels like you can never catch up. Last week you intended to kick-start your prayer and Bible reading but life happened and your time with God did not. And now, somehow the pastor expects you to focus on God speaking this

week without your mind wandering or falling asleep? So again, why does worship feel like you are being asked to take a bunker alone on top of a well-guarded hill?

Again and again, the Bible tells us that worship is an act of warfare. Listen to the Christmas story again. In the small town of Bethlehem, a young pregnant woman is in danger. She's in agony in childbirth.



And hovering around the manger is a dragon! It's red, with seven heads and ten horns, wearing seven crowns, and the creature stands ready to devour the baby. What chance does an infant have against this monstrous scaly beast? The child is born who will rule all the nations with an iron rod as God's Messiah and the King of Kings. The dragon, knowing his doom is sure, seeks his prey. While baby Jesus is saved, escaping to Egypt, countless children under the age of two in Bethlehem find themselves devoured by this dragon (Revelation 12:1-6). The snake from the Garden of Eden has morphed into something monstrous and threatening! Consider adding a dragon to your nativity scene next year! Jesus, the Son of God, was born into a war that began in Adam. It is a war for the allegiance of our hearts.

Consider Jesus' first act as the representative, our Captain and King, in the desert in Matthew 4. "*Again, the devil took him to a very high*

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mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.'" (Matthew 4:8-9) Having already tried to seduce Jesus away from believing God is His good Father with desire and fame, Satan goes right to the heart of the issue: Jesus, who will you worship regardless of the circumstances? Who will you love most?

Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" (Matthew 4:10)

Or again in Matthew 12:29, Jesus describes his ministry as going into a strong man's house and taking his stuff. The only way to loot a UFC champion's home is to tie him up. Jesus is calling the serpent a strong man. The gospel is the good news that Jesus, our Captain and King, walked into the dragon's lair to slay the beast and steal his treasure. What is that treasure? You and me!

What does this have to do with Sunday worship? Jesus shows us. We have been born into a war zone. There is no neutral ground. As Jesus said, "*Whoever is not with me is against me and whoever does not gather with me scatters.*" (Matt. 12:30) Claiming to call God our Father and Jesus our elder brother, through faith, puts a target on our backs. Every day we find our sinful desires clawing for control; a cursed world assaults our home, and the devil loves to whisper condemnation in our ears. So if we don't gather together as God's people regularly to be told once again the story of the gospel, we will be overrun by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13), the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15), our own guilt and shame (Zephaniah 3:17; Romans 8:1), and even the frightful dragon (Matthew 6:13; Revelation 12:17).

How do we fight? We have an unusual battle plan. It's gathering together not to tell ourselves how great we are, but to confess our sins that have been covered by the blood of the Lamb. We gather together to sing of God's goodness while the world falls apart. "Choosing songs for Sunday is like choosing weap-

ons for war."¹ We pray for our enemies and for the faith to persevere. Most of all we proclaim our Lord's death. That Jesus, our Champion, assaulted the dragon without a weapon and was devoured on the cross in our place. It's a poetic way of saying that the One who had no fault or blemish became sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God. And if that moves you, you have picked up your sword, the very word of God: the gospel!

*"Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death."
(Revelation 11-12)*

May God equip you with the very armor of God in Christ (Ephesians 6:10-20) and teach you to fight using the blood of the Lamb and the word of truth regarding Christ's victory on our behalf. Pray for our worship services this year! I am planning on starting a study of the Gospel of Matthew in February so that Jesus' teaching would equip us to make disciples and, Lord willing, even loot the kingdom of the dragon, by introducing unbelievers to our Savior!

"How do we lead the charge in the fight against hell, the world and the flesh? By flooding all of worship's spotlights on Jesus so that every last one of us can fix our gaze upon worship's one true Warrior."²

Pastor Nate



¹Matt Boswell, quoted in Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, 85.

²Ibid.



**Newsletter
Deadline**

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

On New Year's Day guest preacher Matt Abbatiello during the sermon asked, "What is the primary purpose of man?" I was encouraged to notice that several boys who were engaged in the sermon recognized the question and echoed the answer: "To glorify God and enjoy him forever" (Question #1 The Shorter Catechism). As members in the Communicants Class these boys have begun a course of study to show themselves rightly approved. Together we have come to understand that our workbook explains The Shorter Catechism. The Catechism teaches The Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Confession is a summary of and subordinate to the Bible. The Catechism provides a question and answer format to establish and explore the truths of Christian faith. Examples of such doctrines covered include: the Trinity, original sin, justification, the Covenants, Ten Commandments, and much more. The Westminster Confession and Shorter Catechism can easily be found by online search, and are printed in the back of our hymnals.



This is not just for kids! Andrew Conway gives "Five Reasons You Need the Westminster Shorter Catechism."

1. The catechism gives a helpful summary of core beliefs.

In Romans 12 Paul urges Christians to "present their bodies as a living sacrifice" (v. 1). When done in view of God's mercy, this is an act of "spiritual worship" (v. 2). Among other things, this teaching seems to imply that grasping God's mercy in both our mind and heart is essential to authentic Christian living. Before we live a gospel-shaped, Christ-

exalting life, we must have a firm grip on gospel truth.

Of course there are plenty of other documents that can help with this study. It's likewise true the Shorter Catechism goes a bit beyond the core on some matters. Nevertheless, the first 38 questions and answers offer a succinct, clear, and heartwarming summary of central Christian beliefs.

Do you want a firmer grip on central Christian truths? Are you looking for a resource that can help you teach these doctrines to others? If so, engaging with the Shorter Catechism is worth it.

2. The catechism rightly views salvation as past, present, and future.

The story goes that an eager evangelist got on a train and asked the man sitting opposite him: "Are you saved?" The other replied, "I am, I am being, and I will be." Somewhat puzzled at this response, the evangelist tried again: "You don't understand. Are you saved?" The other man simply reiterated his first answer: "I am, I am being, and I will be." The other man was Charles Spurgeon.

I'm not sure whether this story is authentic or not, but it illustrates a vital point. It's easy to misconstrue salvation as merely something that happened when I became a Christian, thus overlooking its present and future dimensions.

Here, too, the catechism can help us when it talks about ongoing salvation, stressing how believers are renewed in God's image and increasingly enabled to slay sin and live in holiness (Answer 35). The catechism teaches about future salvation, too, pointing us to the day when believers will be "perfectly blessed, in the full enjoying of God to all eternity" (Answer 38).

3. The catechism calls for whole-life discipleship.

This point follows naturally from the previous one. Once the catechism teaches believers about their salvation and their daily fight with sin, it's no surprise it then offers how we ought to live. This teaching largely comes in the form of a powerful and practical exposition of the Ten Commandments. The catechism doesn't call Christians to live by the commandments in a legalistic or chore-like fashion. Instead, we take them as an expression of God's moral will for the lives of his believing people. For example, the explanation of the eighth commandment (Questions 73 to 75) has obvious practical implications for our daily work.

In a nutshell, the catechism is thoughtfully arranged to show us how the commandments lead us to the redeeming love of God and help us live in an ongoing experience of that love.

4. The catechism opens the door to the wisdom of the Puritans.

When we think about the past, we can easily fall prey to one of two mistakes. The first is to view it through rose-tinted glasses, imagining everything was wonderful "back then." The other is to ignore it entirely, thus missing out on valuable historical lessons.

We shouldn't idolize the Puritans, but much can be gained from paying attention to them. If, for example, you read Thomas Watson, you'll find statements like this: "We are more sure to arise out of our graves than out of our beds." Or Richard Sibbes: "There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us."

Would you like to tap into this mine

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Learn God's Word

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of spiritual gold? The Shorter Catechism is a great place to get acquainted with Puritan wisdom.

5. Our “chief end” really is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

There's no doubt that the opening answer is the most famous portion of the Shorter Catechism.

To realize our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever is to appreciate the whole thrust of Scripture, to see into God's heart, and to discover our own purpose. A real grasp of this truth can enable us to see that knowing Jesus is eternal life, and that losing our lives for him means finding true life.

The catechism's first answer is worth our engagement. Yet the Westminster divines didn't just leave us one answer, they offered another 106. And they are worth our attention too.

Andrew Conway (M.Div., Union Theological College, Belfast) is the minister of Hilltown and Clonduff Presbyterian Churches in County Down, Northern Ireland. He and his wife, Sarah, have a delightful young daughter, Annie. Andrew is the author of [*The Shorter Catechism Made Simple*](#), which we are using in our Communicants Class.



The above photo was taken at the Christmas Craft Night held in early December. Our children and some of their friends from Camp H.O.P.E. were able to move from table to table to make a number of Christmas Crafts and Ornaments. There was also a time of refreshments which adults and children alike all enjoyed.



Snapshot on Children's Ministry
By Melanie Combs



The children's Sunday School and Children's Church programs have gone into the winter curriculum. The middle elementary group will be working on a project that they will share with the congregation. The older elementary students are working hard to learn catechism questions and answers. Please help them at home in their endeavor. The adult Sunday School finished up the Discipleship Explored program and will be starting on “**Visual Theology: Seeing and Understanding the Truth about God**” by Tim Challies and Josh Byers. This book combines the talents of an author and designer to not just help you read about but also to SEE important truths about Christian living. As one reviewer put it, “This is show-and-tell at its finest.” We hope you are able to join the adult Sunday School to fully utilize this practical resource.

Christ-centeredly
Helping families
Raise children of all ages
In the knowledge of the
Savior, so
That each
Individual learns to see
All that God has done and
Never forgets one's training for LIFE.

Every paper, lesson, and book is a resource to help
Develop study habits and understanding.

Helpful Thought

The Bible certainly has answers for when you are explaining something to your children. There are other helpful places to look as well. The words in hymns and praise songs are full of meaning. If you are having trouble with a tough concept or need further help explaining something to your older child, why not look up the words to a hymn or praise song and read through them together. Then have some fun singing them.

Interact in Worship

Singing Matters

By John VanVoorhis (Hope Church RE)

Do you ever wonder why singing is such a big part of our worship? In the Western church, the ancient art and practice of singing by the layperson in the church was largely forgotten during the Middle Ages. However, the Reformers recovered the practice in the sixteenth-century Reformation, and the revival has come down to us through the five centuries since then. Musical fads and fashions come and go, but the Christian church has generally been known for her music, and particularly our singing, a significant element of our weekly worship of God. Wherever disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ gather, we nearly universally express our hopes, our prayers as we rehearse God's promises in song.

The best (and many would say the only) reason that we should do anything in worshipping God is that He has ordained to bring glory to His name. "The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture." (WCF XXI.1) God's prescription for the use of humans (and all creation) to singing in worshipping him is so prevalent in Scripture as to make it patently undeniable. Literally hundreds of verses contain exhortations for the church to sing their praises, and examples abound of men and women praising the Lord in song from overflowing hearts, and thereby receiving God's eternal commendation. Both their songs and their stories will continue to be told as long as God's Word endures.

From this I hope that it us plain that

it is proper to sing in worship. But is the "singing" we do today really what God wants from us? Does the "singing" of Bible correspond to the singing we practice today? Is it possible that we have gotten off-track somehow? In this article I hope that I can shed a little insight into the Biblical words translated in our English Bibles as "sing," and maybe change your thinking a little.

It may not surprise you to learn that the Old Testament has much more to say about singing in worship than the New Testament. After all, the Psalms are God's "song book," and together they make up the largest book in the entire Bible. Here is what the Hebrew words for "singing" show us about how the Old Testament church should have understood the exhortation to "sing" to the Lord. (I will cite only phonetic spelling, as the Hebrew alphabet is a puzzle to me, and most likely a total mystery to you.)



The first common word I find in the Psalms translated into English as "sing" is [zaw-mar']. According to my Hebrew dictionary, the root word here relates to "striking with the fingers" (literally a motion something like "pruning a vine"), properly, to touch or pluck the strings of a musical instrument, to "play upon it," to "make music, with the inference of being *accompanied* by the voice." This word is found 45 times in the Old Testament, usually translated in the ESV as "sing praises." For example, see **Isaiah 12:5 (ESV)**; "Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth."

The second common word I want to consider is [*sheer*]. The term relates

to the idea of a "strolling minstrel," as it is associated with a root meaning of "turning" or "traveling about." A good example is found in **1 Samuel 18:6 (ESV)**: "As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments," describing the celebration that broke out following David's victory over Goliath. We find this word 84 times in Scripture, one other example being **Psalms 13:6 (ESV)**, "I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me."

The final word I want us to consider here is [*raw-naan*']. This word, found 51 times, relates to a root that means "cry out," related to the idea of making "creaking" or "grating" sounds. This kind of "singing" is plainly not related to anything we would say is pleasant to the ear! It better expresses the actions of a people who are shouting aloud for joy, crying out and being joyful in triumph. One example is found in **Psalms 149:5 (ESV)**; "Let the godly exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds." The music creation makes when God comes to judge the earth is described by the same term poetically in **1 Chronicles 16:32-33 (ESV)**: "Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth."

The New Testament words generally translated from the original Greek as "singing" are more generic and closer to what we understand of music today. [*Hymneo*] (to sing hymns) and [*a'-do*] (which comes down to us in the English word "adore") are plain and straightforward

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Interact in Worship

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ward. The one interesting word I find [*psallo*] (to rub or touch the surface, to twitch or twang as in playing a stringed instrument) comes to us through a translation of an Old Testament passage containing [*zaw-mar*’].

So what is the “big idea” I want to give you from this word study? I hope that we can see that the kind of singing that the Lord wants from us is at heart no more than your honest expression of the joy that you experience when you hear once more about the great victory accomplished for us by the Christ we know through the Gospel. Our music doesn’t have to be “nice” or “pretty” or even necessarily pleasant-sounding. God isn’t impressed by human musical talent. Such expression can and should be enhanced and complemented by the use of accompanying instruments (I am partial to strings myself). And we should carry our songs with us wherever we go, to let the sound go out both far and near. We should be peculiarly joyful people who cannot be silent or silenced, singing God’s praise, even (and especially) through times of sorrow, difficulty and disappointment.

Will you, not
revive
us again, that
your people may
rejoice
in you?
PSALM 85:6, ESV

Despite what we may think in our weaker moments, it is good (Psalm 92:1) and pleasant (Psalm 135:3) to make music in honor of God’s name and in thankfulness for what he has done for

us. Let’s not worry so much about how it sounds to earthly ears - let’s care a whole lot more how well our voices and instruments bring honor to our Savior in light of what he has done for us. As believers in Christ, if we understand the truth, even just a little bit, it is unreasonable to be discouraged. And “if anyone is cheerful” (in fine spirits, merry), “let him sing praise” **James 5:13 (ESV)** (i.e., [*psallo*]). I’ll break out my guitar and let the song begin again! So join us next week. I’m already looking forward to hearing us one more time.

God is Working His Purpose Out

Words by Arthur Campbell Aigner, 1894. Music by Benson

God is working his purpose out
as year succeeds to year;
God is working his purpose out,
And the time is drawing near;
nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

From utmost east to utmost west,
wherever foot hath trod,
by the mouth of many messengers
goes forth the voice of God;
give ear to me, ye continents,
ye isles, give ear to me,
that earth may filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

What can we do to work God’s work,
to prosper and increase
the brotherhood of all mankind—
the reign of the Prince of Peace?
What can we do to hasten the time—
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

March we forth in the strength of God,
with the banner of Christ unfurled,
that the light of the glorious gospel of truth
may shine throughout the world:
fight we the fight with sorrow and sin
to set their captives free,
that earth may filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

All we can do is nothing worth
unless God blessed the deed;
vainly we hope for the harvest-tide
till God gives life to the seed;
yet nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

Foster Loving Relationships

A Day of Celebration

Sunday, December 11 was a very special day in the life of Hope Church. We celebrated four baptisms and accepted nine people into membership! New members are: Anne Mastro, George and Tiffanie Cheng, DeAnna Smith and Katherine Childs; new members through transfer of membership from other PCA churches are Brian and Hellen McKeon and Patrick and Laura Childs. And Pastor Nate baptized little Joshua McKeon (born September 3, 2016) and Peyton Childs (born (March 13 , 2016), George Cheng, Jr. (age 6) and Graciela Cheng (age 4).

What a day of celebration for us all!



Foster Loving Relationships

On Saturday, January 28, we gathered for a lovely meal hosted by the Session! Thanks—Nate, Jeff, John (and Sally!) for putting together a wonderful meal, with meatballs and pasta provided by Auggie’s! After the meal, the children adjourned to the nursery and the big room under the sanctuary while the adults met above them.

A sense of anticipation and thankfulness were palpable throughout the meeting. John VanVoorhis gave the Session Report (“The Vision of Hope”). He stressed the crucial role of prayer in the elders’ planning and oversight as they seek to maintain a Christ-centered ministry here. I was reminded of the awesome responsibility these men carry as they consider the worship, prayer ministry, Gospel formation, preaching, small groups, individual oversight, and local and global outreach here at Hope. They also have a responsibility to the New York State Presbytery and sister churches in our area. Please pray for these men.

In our Deacon Jim Cornick’s absence, Jeff Butler gave the Treasurer’s Report and presented the budget for 2017. We are thankful that our giving for the past year was above the budgeted amount and our spending was less, and that we are now able to support a new missionary! Jim described the many projects that have improved and maintained our facilities during 2016, and he expressed appreciation for all the work done by our new Diaconal Committee (Stan Trestick, Fred Richards, and David Whitehead). We thank Jim, who is our only ordained Deacon, for his tireless work, oversight and planning!

Melanie Combs, our Director of Christian Education, reported on her ministry to our children. Every week she prepares sermon notes on two levels to help the children to be more involved in the service. (I hope you’ve seen

Looking Backward and Forward at Our Annual Congregational Meeting

By Rae Whitehead

her passing out messages and activities on clipboards, with crayons, to children age six and beyond.) She oversees our Sunday School and Children’s Church programs and writes a children’s page in our newsletters. With her presence on the Worship Team and work in the sound booth, she is indeed a busy lady!

Jill Martz and Terry Cornick are our only deaconesses. Jill reported on their work during 2016. They’ve been busy coordinating meals for those with illnesses or new babies and transportation and donations of food or gas cards where needed within and outside the church. They are planning to send care packages to college students from the congregation. We are thankful for them as they oversee our mercy ministries!

The Moderator’s Report, given by Nate, was upbeat and anticipatory. Nate is looking forward to more participation in the local scene as we get more involved in the BSBPA, reach out in a local mobile home park with the Alliance church, work out a visitors’ welcome plan, increase involvement in small groups, host Presbytery, and plan a men’s retreat. Nate is praying that as we head into the new sermon series on Matthew, we will learn, teach, and take the Gospel wherever we go. What became clear throughout our meeting is that we need new leaders to support those who are working so diligently and prayerfully for the ministry of Hope Church. Please pray for that!

After a short time of discussion, a hymn and a prayer, we adjourned, eager to meet again for worship the following day and to go forward into the new year—together!

Eben Perkins: grand prize winner in the Galway school’s 4th-8th grade Spelling Bee. It’s the first time they’ve had a 5th-grade champion. He worked so hard and we are so proud!



Foster Loving Relationships

“Showers of Blessing”

On January 7 the women of Hope held a Blessing Shower for little Joshua Matete McKeon and his family. Years ago, Naomi Turner Emerson instituted “blessing showers” modeled after the women of the “days when the judges ruled” in Israel. These women of Bethlehem gathered around Naomi (the baby’s grandmother) to praise God for the birth of Obed to Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4:14 and 15). The women blessed the baby, who became the grandfather of David.

Similarly, the women here gathered to rejoice with the McKeon family and to shower little Joshua with blessings.: words from the Word, personal words of encouragement, and gifts. We praise God for giving us the blessing of new life, and we rejoice with big sisters Niya and Sameera and parents Hellen and Brian.



DOORWAY TO HOPE STAFF

DIRECTOR: LORD JESUS
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EDITOR: Rae Whitehead
SUPPORT: All the Prayers of All of
the Church family



BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Patrick Childs
- 3 Suzanne Bishop
- 3 Eva Anderson
- 3 Jody Collinge
- 5 Ezra Thompson
- 6 Leslie Perkins
- 9 Hannah Mailloux
- 9 Christopher Childs
- 11 Luke and Leah Mailloux
- 12 Matthias Miller
- 13 Bob Smith
- 15 Fred Richards
- 15 Rae Whitehead
- 22 John Milne
- 26 Dan Emerson
- 29 Febie Layug

A Testimony

By Katherine Childs

From the moment I was born, I was exposed to Christianity. I was baptized a little after birth and from then on I was surrounded by all the children’s Christian songs and Bible verses and stories. From there I was part of Bible groups and classes and eventually made a member of our previous church. From there my family and I arrived here and I had another opportunity to be made a member of a church. I took the membership classes which I learned a lot more than I thought I would from. When I gave my testimony to the elders I felt more nervous because being at the younger age I was when I was made a member of our previous church. This time I began to realize just how important this testimony and membership were. When I was made a member of Hope Church I felt happy because I really do love this church and feel excitement for what the future holds for me and the church. I am very happy I was made a member of this church and I am grateful that I was given the opportunity to do it over again.

Extend God's Hope

“Let Us Encourage One Another...” (Hebrews 10:25b) Ladies Bible Study

By Rae Whitehead

When prayer for one another becomes so integrated into daily lives that it seems to be part of our DNA, we know that we've been privileged to experience Hebrews 10: 24 and 25. Our Wednesday night Ladies Bible Study has helped these verses to become reality. We share our hearts and lives weekly, and pray and study between meetings. We've been able to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Heb. 10 24); and we've learned a lot about the Bible, too!

We've been meeting every Wednesday evening at the Church for about five years. (We realized recently that we have prayed one of our sisters through her daughter's college search, gap year, and college years!) We begin our time with sharing and prayer and then study our current book of the Bible. Our prayers encompass our church, community and beyond. We have studied the Psalms, Ruth, Hosea, Matthew, Acts, 2 Corinthians, I John, and we are now going through a two-year study of Isaiah. Our studies originate in New Life Presbyterian Church in Glenside, PA, and are written by a committee of women there (including Leslie Perkins' sister).

As our commitment to the Lord and to His Word grows, so also grows our commitment to one another. We would love to grow in numbers, too! If there are any ladies out there who could commit to a Wed. evening outing, please come on in!

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as we see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10: 24-25 NIV

Thursday Night Discipleship Group

By Jeannine Jeter

The biggest surprise with the small group that meets at the Cutler's is how much better I'm getting to know them all, considering I've gone to church with the Richards', the Mailloux and the Cutlers for over 20 years. Evidently I've kept it on an "in passing" level.

I was in the Northenders bible study for many years, and enjoyed that we ended up attending different churches, because it seemed to add more perspectives. But I think there's another benefit in studying with fellow church members; that it reinforces a family sort of bond.

Another thing that's reinforced is the lesson of the sermon, since the theme of the study examines that week's sermon. This is new to me, and I've begun to appreciate the ways people in their late 20s and 30s have of making things happen. I've noticed it with my nieces and nephews and I notice it with Nate - they make things happen. And they're happening in an atmosphere of good humor, love and support.



Operation Christmas Child

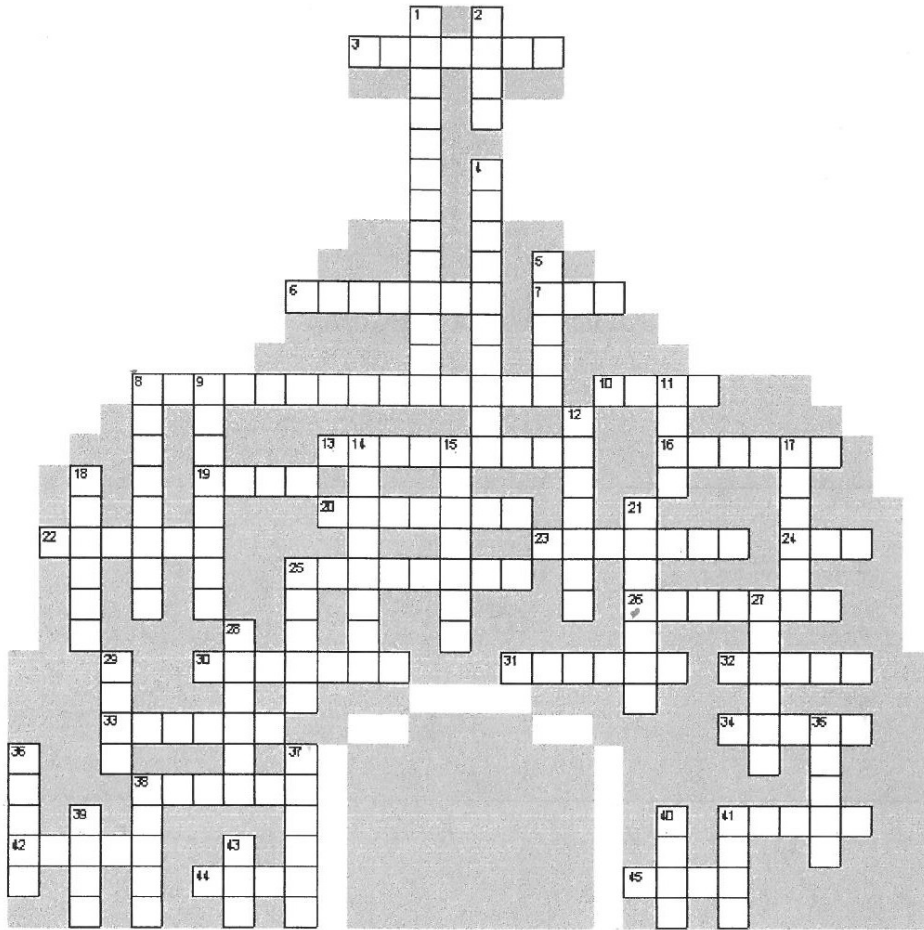
A PROJECT of SAMARITAN'S PURSE

Thank you for participating in the Operation Christmas Child shoebox program. Those boxes and the love put into them gave an opportunity to children around the world to hear about Jesus Christ. Hope Church filled a little over 50 boxes; that is more than double from the year before.

It's never too early to start thinking about filling a shoebox. Please be praying that in 2017 we can again fill boxes with the love that will bring so much hope to children around the world.

Marybeth Gibbins

People of the Bible



- | Across | |
|--|---|
| 3. Title of the kings of Egypt | 31. Thrown into the lion's den |
| 6. Deceives Samson | 32. Swallowed up by a great fish |
| 7. First woman | 33. Jacob's eldest son |
| 8. Builder of Babylon; takes Jerusalem captive | 34. A shepherd boy who God chooses to be King |
| 10. First man | 38. Destroys Jericho |
| 13. Father of John the Baptist | 41. Betrays the Christ |
| 16. Queen who helped Mordecai save the Jews | 42. Led the Israelites out of Egypt |
| 19. Brother of Jesus | 44. Built an ark |
| 20. A prophetess and judge of Israel | 45. Marries Boaz |
| 22. Aaron's sister who leads a victory song | |
| 23. Called out of his tomb | |
| 24. Afflicted by Satan | |
| 25. Saul's son; loved by David | |
| 26. Paul's young "son in the faith" | |
| 30. A king known for his wisdom | |

- | Down | |
|---|---|
| 1. First to see the risen Christ | 27. A doubtful one |
| 2. Killed Abel | 28. Mary's husband |
| 4. The handwriting was on his wall | 28. Had a coat of many colors |
| 5. A fisherman who walked on water | 29. Mother of Jesus |
| 8. Cupbearer to Artaxerxes I; rebuilds Jerusalem's wall | 35. The promised son of Abraham |
| 9. Jacob's youngest son | 36. Ruth's mother-in-law |
| 11. First murder victim | 37. Lazarus' busy sister |
| 12. Son of Abraham and Hagar | 38. The Christ; the Son of God and Savior of the world |
| 14. One of the three who survived the fiery furnace | 39. Hairy hunter who sold his birthright |
| 15. Father of the faith | 40. First king of Israel |
| 17. Was transported into heaven in a chariot of fire | 41. Wrote the Book of Revelations |
| 18. Brought Nathanael to Christ | 43. Abraham's nephew; his wife turned to a pillar of salt |
| 21. A tax collector who became an apostle and an author of the gospel | |
| 25. Wrestles with an angel | |

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



**COMING SATURDAY, MARCH 4th AT 4:30 PM
THE “NOT SO TALENT,” TALENT SHOW!**



Get ready for a fun and hilarious night
Packed with lots of creative talent, “or not!”

We are looking for 12 or more acts from groups or individuals.
No age restrictions and no experience necessary!

Want to participate but can’t think of an act? Please speak to Marybeth Gibbins, she’s
looking for your talent, “or not.”

We will also be needing volunteers to help with the sound system, download of music,
stage set-up, and of course, the emcee!

All those wishing to participate, including volunteers, should contact Marybeth by Sunday, February 12th to reserve
their part.

A potluck supper will immediately follow downstairs in the fellowship room.
Please look for the sign-up sheet for both the potluck and the talent show.