



Doorway to Hope

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

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

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Being Knit Together as Friends

Listen with me to Pastor George Herbert lament the loss of friendship:

“But love is lost; The way of friendship is gone, though David had his Jonathan, Christ his John.”

Before cell phones became a part of every conversation, before social media was complicating relationships and before anyone could binge on Netflix alone, deep friendships were rare – even inside the church. The people to whom Jesus said, “Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has none than this, that someone lay down his life for another. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I have called you friends.” (John 15:12-17)

Yet 400 years ago, when Herbert wrote this, deep friendships between followers of Jesus were hard to find. How are we doing in this modern age of loneliness? According to Jesus, his followers are to be a community of God’s friends, saved by Jesus’ friendship, now called to love one another with a friendship love. Is that your experience?

Listen to the friendship words spoken between David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1-5). Go read it now. I’ll wait.

Jonathan knit his soul together

with David.

Jonathan cut a covenant with David.

He loved him as his own soul.

To be a biblical friend, we knit, covenant with, and love another Jesus-follower. What does that mean?

Start with this important Bible word used here to describe Jonathan and David’s connection: *nephesh*. It is translated “soul”. Their souls are knit together. *Nephesh* refers to a person’s throat. For example, Psalm 42 begins with, “My *nephesh* (soul) pants for you O God, like a deer pants for the water.” My dry *nephesh* (throat) is longing for you, O God. I’m dying without your life-giving presence, God. There are commandments against taking someone’s *nephesh* (do not murder) and kidnapping a *nephesh* (don’t steal people). You start to get the picture that my *nephesh* is all of me. So when God says, “Love me with all your *nephesh* (soul)” in Deuteronomy 6:4, we are told to

love God with all of our being.

Jonathan knit his *nephesh* to David. Jonathan’s life is knitted together with David’s in love (Colossians. 2:2). You can’t pull on the Jonathan thread without getting David or vice versa. They are intertwined. That’s biblical friendship. Their lives are woven together.

There’s more. Jonathan cut a covenant with David. To cut a covenant was to make “a bond in blood.” It’s promise language. I swear to be for you for better or for worse. When you are a drain on my emotions, my energy, my *nephesh*, I promise to stay. My life for yours. Because I love your *nephesh* the way I love my own *nephesh*. Your thirst is my thirst. Your tears are my tears. Your joy is my joy. Your sorrow is my sorrow.

Welcome to the world of friendship: It is achingly beautiful. It is accompanied by the promise of shedding blood for the sake of your friend

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(covenant) and intimate. To have a friend is to be loved with an 'I will not leave you alone'-type love. This is a covenant relationship. Our tear ducts and the breaths we breathe are bound together.

Keep going in the story of David and Jonathan. Out of love for his friend, Jonathan gave his robe, his armor, his sword, his bow and his belt. The actions are communicating this: “All that I have, is yours.” My nephesh is sacrificing for you and your good. Jonathan was destined to be the next King of Israel, as the heir of Saul. Yet, for his friend, he sacrifices his future claim of kingship out of love for David. This is not a convenient, rational relationship.

Ultimately this covenant bond cost Jonathan his life. By not listening to Saul's command to kill David, Jonathan ended up dying on the battlefield against the Philistines. Both were slain in battle. And so David grieved the loss of the love of his friend: "*Jonathan your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women. How the mighty have fallen...*"

This is the way of friendship. It is a mutual love, a knitting together of lives: serving and sacrificing. There's more to it of course (read Proverbs). At minimum, it is this idea: "I am committed to you. My life for yours." Now, go be a biblical friend!

No pressure! The Gospel of John is the latest gospel written. John had years to reflect on his friendship with Jesus. It is at the cross and at the Last Supper we are told of the depths of John and Jesus' friendship. John is "the disciple whom Jesus loved." And it is on the cross that John sees how Jesus knits His nephesh to His friends'.

Jesus said, “I thirst.” His nephesh was dry. He is laying down His nephesh for his friends, in order to fulfill a Scripture (Psalm 69:19-21) which accuses us of being bad friends. Jesus died without comforters, so that we could be His friends. So we can say, like John, “I am the one Jesus loved.” Now, as the beloved of God, go befriend another like that in the church.

This year, in the newsletter, I want to show how friendship with God and one another is a theme all throughout the Bible story. The goal, as it is with all Biblical theology, is to live it out together. Today, let's start with two basic confessions. First, I need Jesus to teach me how to be a friend. And second, (maybe this is a hard correction), the church is commanded by Jesus to be the place where we cultivate deep friendships together. How do you start?

If you have other ideas, let me know! But at minimum it is intentional time spent together. In the Gospel of John, it is three years before we hear of John's friendship. Look for opportunities to eat together, repeatedly. Serve in ministry together. Bonds grow when we serve the gospel of Jesus together. Be ready to forgive and work through the awkward beginnings. Time spent will knit together our nephesh. It will be the grace demonstrated that binds us together in Christ.

*Your friend put in your bosom: wear his eyes
Still in your heart, that he may see what's there.
If cause require, you are his sacrifice;
Your drops of blood must pay down all his fear;
But love is lost; the way of friendship's gone,
Though David had his Jonathan, Christ His John.*



In our brief sermon series last fall we spent time looking at the Gospel Walk. A follower of Jesus is someone who has repented, believed the gospel, follows Jesus and is being formed into a fisher of men. We are maturing into Jesus-followers who love people as Jesus loved people. But how do you get there?

Our small groups are beginning a book called *The Walk: Steps for New and Renewed Followers of Jesus* by Stephen Smallman. It's for those who don't know anything about the Bible and have no Christian background. It's also for those who have drifted far away from God and don't know where to begin. God-willing, as we read the Scriptures together, we will all grow in our ability to be discipled in order to disciple others. We will be formed into fishers of men (Mark 1:17).

Learn God's Word

Putting God First **Help From the "Devotionals for Life" Series**

By Rae Whitehead



"Fishing for compliments, overcommitting (or never committing), keeping people at a distance...when we fear other people more than we fear God, we become anxious slaves to their opinions and approval." Does this sound familiar? It sure does to me! So I signed out the booklet **Fearing Others: Putting God First**, by Zach Schlegel, from our church library. Our elders have been telling us, from the pulpit and in the bulletins, about the Biblical Counseling Coalition's series of 31-Day Devotionals. Each of the eleven small books (in our library) deals with a different struggle Christians have, such as doubt, anxiety, money, lack of assurance, anger. Each is written by a different biblical counselor, pastor, or teacher. (To learn more about the Biblical Counseling Coalition, go to biblicalcounselingcoalition.org.)

The devotional **Fearing Others: Putting God First** contains a month's worth of daily readings. (Absorbing them took me longer!) Daily titles for the "Understand and Identify Your Fear of Others" section are instructive: We Obey What We Fear; The Fear of Falling; The Grasshopper Syndrome. In "Overcome Your Fear of Others," some of the daily devotionals are: Relax; You're Not the Expert on You; Rejoice—God is for You; Walk in the Light; Pray for a United Heart.

Fearing Others: Putting God First helped me to be more aware of the pervasiveness of my sin of the fear of man. It also reminded me that God is my Rescuer and Redeemer, and that I can turn to Him constantly as I see my fear of what others think of me looming. And, when I get discouraged that I'm still struggling with the same old sin, I can say, with Zach Schlegel as he quotes John Newton: *Yet, though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say, I am not what I once was; a slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle, and acknowledge, "By the grace of God I am what I am."*



There is a room hidden off of the back corner of the sanctuary that is under used but is filled with literary treasures. This room contains hundreds of books (some new and some old) which may enhance your Christian life and cause you to grow or just be entertained.

The Hope Church library has a lot of new books that Pastor Nate has recommended for our reading. These books are placed on a wall where they can be easily seen.

Over the next year we will be working on "weeding out" some of the time-worn and outdated volumes while introducing more modern books.

There are two binders which will become increasingly more helpful as we update our system so that you can look for books according to author or title.

It's easy to sign out a book as follows:

1. Remove card from pocket inside book.
2. Write the present date and your name on the card.
3. Place the card in the box provided.
4. Enjoy reading!

If you come across offerings that don't seem in line with our doctrine or if you are looking for a particular book, please speak to Pastor Nate or Sally Jenkins and we will see what we can do to make our library even better.

Sally says: "Kindles are handy and nice, but there is something to be said for holding a book (or Bible) in your hand and being able to turn the pages!")



*Let the message
of Christ dwell
among you rich-
ly as you teach
and admonish
one another with
all wisdom
through psalms,
hymns, and
songs from the Spirit, singing to
God with gratitude in your
hearts. Colossians 3:16*

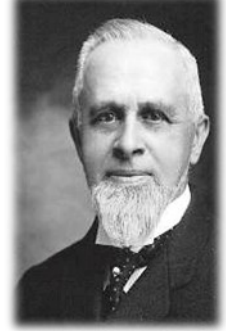
For this month's article the hymn selected focuses on the adoration and praise Scripture declares our Father God deserves. Our selection deals with one of the most loved hymns written by Brewster, New York native **Frances (Fanny) Jane Crosby** (1820–1915). Penned in 1872 and published in 1875 with the title of "Praise for Redemption," its name was changed in 1954 ***To God Be the Glory*** to reflect the original musical tune applied the piece by **William Howard Doane** (1832–1915).

In contrast to many gospel hymns (including the majority of Crosby's 8,000 written pieces), "To God Be the Glory" directs our attention away from personal experience to focus completely on the glory of God. Those who review the history surrounding the author's writing of this hymn find that several Scriptures from the King James Version (KJV) are reflected in her verses.

Thoughts of praise found in: Psalm 126:3, (*"The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad"*); Psalm 145:3, 4 & 21, (*"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable, ⁴ One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts, ²¹ My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever."*); Galatians 1:3-5 (*"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father, ⁵ To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen"*): Romans 15:6 (*"That ye with one mind and one mouth glorify God..."*), and further noted the adoration proclaimed in the Gospel of Acts 4:21 (*"All the people were praising God for what had happened"*).

In Job 19:25-27, we see these verses: *²⁵For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, ²⁶And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: ²⁷Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.* The phrase "when Jesus we see," in stanza 3, spoke volumes regarding the deep faith of Crosby, who had been blinded when she was sev-

en weeks old. In all aspects the glorious hymn "To God Be the Glory" celebrates the greatness of God and calls upon all creatures to demonstrate an appreciation for the wondrous things "He hath done." It is a hymn to be sung joyfully in the spirit of gratitude.



To God Be the Glory

**To God be the glory, great
things He hath done;
So loved He the world that He
gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atone-
ment for sin,
And opened the life gate that
all may go in.**

Refrain

**Praise the Lord,
Praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord,
Praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through
Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory, great
things He hath done.**

**O perfect redemption,
the purchase of blood,
To every believer the promise
of God;
The vilest offender who truly
believes,
That moment from Jesus a
pardon receives.**

(Refrain)

(Continued on page 5)

Interact in Worship

(Continued from page 4)

**Great things He hath taught us, great things He
hath done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.**
(Refrain)

Today this appears in many Christian hymnals and is located on page 55 in our Trinity Hymnal at HOPE.

Some records indicate the music for this stirring song was first used in London in 1873, before it was apparently published in 1875 by Lowry and Doane in their *Brightest and Best* song collection. The song was only published then because of the popularity it had gained in Great Britain following Ira Sankey's use of it during Dwight L. Moody's 1873-1874 evangelistic campaigns there. Yet here in the States, the song was placed in few hymnals and saw little usage for some 80 years.

Then, in **1954**, the Lord provided Billy Graham and his evangelistic team the opportunity to appear in **London's Harringay Arena**. While planning for the Crusade, team music director Cliff Barrows was preparing the hymns for the *Greater London Crusade Song Book*. It was during this time that Mr. Barrows was approached by the prolific preacher Rev. Frank Colquhoun from the Norwich Cathedral. Rev. Colquhoun, a reported lover of hymns, requested that the piece *Praise for Redemption* be included in the Crusade Song Book. Although Barrows was not familiar with the hymn he decided to include it anyway, using the title ***To God Be the Glory*** that William Doane had placed on the musical score.

Those who have read the background stories surrounding the Greater London Crusade know of the many financial, physical, political, and negative British press problems the Graham Team had face and overcome before the Crusade began. The team, though challenged from every corner by

those who predicted failure, sought God's intervention on their knees and believed God would be glorified. "To God Be the Glory" became the Crusade theme and Fanny Crosby's old hymn was sung nearly every night in the Harringay Arena.

The facility was packed for three months and the event sparked a sense of revival across Great Britain. (There are several **You Tube Videos** covering the London Crusade, and we suggest that you view them for a blessing.) As a result, the hymn ***To God Be the Glory*** found a renewed worldwide life as one of Christianity's favorite hymns. In our most



recent years it was popularized when sung by vocal artist Andraé Crouch, as part of ***My Tribute (To God Be the Glory)***.

In the next issue of ***Doorway to Hope*** more emphasis will be placed on the lives of **Fanny J. Crosby** and **W. Howard Doane** and the reported contributions they have made to God and others. No doubt you will be as amazed as we were.



Foster Loving Relationships



Snapshot on Children's Ministry
By Melanie Combs



From Our Director of Christian Education

As a teacher I just love “teachable moments:” those special moments that aren’t in the plan book, aren’t scripted, aren’t looked for. They just happen when a lesson sparks questions in the minds of students and you might have to go off on a tangent. In my school classroom they happen often, and it’s a joy to rely on the Holy Spirit, especially if you’re not sure how to address any questions that come up. I have seen the Holy Spirit work through me in many of those occasions. I’ve had practice with these kinds of moments and it has gotten easier through the years to listen and let the words flow, knowing that it was not in my power that I spoke.

Not being a parent myself, I can only imagine that those types of “teachable moments” are most of the types of moments parents have (unless you do make lesson plans on what to talk about during the week). Remaining open to the Holy Spirit’s prompting is so important when children throw a surprising question at you or they bring up something they heard at school.

I want to encourage parents to work on their own ability to listen to the Holy Spirit. When hard questions come up, don’t give in to a spirit of fear, or passing the buck to another, or hoping it gets covered in Sunday School or church. If you don’t have an answer, let your child know and pray about it, and perhaps seek advice. Come back to the conversation when you feel more informed and able to let the Holy Spirit speak through you to your child. Also, don’t be afraid of making a mistake. If you say something in the moment that you want to readdress when you’ve thought about it, bring it up again with your child. The more you practice listening to the Holy Spirit in those moments, the better you will get at it. It takes some stress off those difficult conversations. Be encouraged, for the Holy Spirit is always with you!

Melanie Combs

Camp H.O.P.E. is Coming!

At the Congregational Meeting I announced the Camp HOPE theme for this year. It will be “Arctic Blast: A Flurry of Reading.” The program will be held August 3-7 from 9-noon with a community picnic after the program on Friday, August 7th. We are in need of many volunteers for many different projects involved with making the week successful. Please keep an eye out for announcements in the bulletin for meetings and opportunities to help.

I also talked about opportunities to volunteer to work with our Hope Church children in different ways. We can always use volunteers for Children’s Church and Sunday School. If you are at all interested, please let me know. We wouldn’t throw you under the bus, so to speak. We can set up times for you to shadow one of the current volunteers and even look at the lesson books so you can see how well each lesson is laid out for novice teachers all the way to more experienced ones.



Foster Loving Relationships

Congregational Meeting: January 25

By Rae Whitehead

Augies' meatballs and ziti created an auspicious beginning to our evening together! It's always special to gather together; why not celebrate with food? We thank those who set up, cleaned up, and provided for our meal.

Throughout our meeting, what stood out to me were the tremendous gifts of time and energy and wisdom and skill that many have given to make our church community function. The humility with which Elder John VanVoorhis gave the **Session Report** ("Who is sufficient for these things?") set a theme of service to one another, and so to the Lord, which ran through all the reports. As a congregation, we thanked Jeff Butler, who has served continuously as our elder for over twelve years. May he now have some well-deserved family time! We also gave a round of applause (in absentia) to Jim Cornick, who has been our over-worked only deacon, even during his travels, for many years. He and Elder John were voted unanimously into their respective offices, and will continue in their service for another three years. We were all urged to pray for them, and for more elders and deacons to serve with them.

In Jim Cornick's absence, Brandon Perkins gave the **Treasurer's Report** and Presentation of the 2020 Budget, which he, Ben Bowman, and Nick Stokes had helped to prepare. Facility expenses for 2020 will be especially high because of two ma-

jor projects: the hook-up to public water and an air conditioning system. (We are thankful that giving for 2019 was above the budgeted amount!)

Ruth Richards, who has been our accounts payable clerk for many years, was thanked for her service as she retires. Pastor Nate's salary package, which is the only part of the budget on which the congregation votes, was passed unanimously.



Jill Martz gave the **Diaconal Ministries Report**. She and Terry Cornick have been our faithful deaconesses for many years, helping supply the practical needs of our church and the local community. They also distribute funds for the Ballston Area Clergy Association, a group of local churches which works together to minister to those in need.

In her report, Melanie Combs, our **Christian Education Director**, described Camp HOPE, our summer reading camp, which has served children in our community for seven years. This August, our theme will be "A Flurry of Reading" with an

emphasis on the Arctic. Melanie described the many opportunities to volunteer during that busy week. She also discussed the need for Sunday School teachers and volunteers to help with Children's Church.

Pastor Jim gave us his **Pastor of Congregational Care Report**. He described 2019 as a transitional year, as he has worked fulltime and cared for us-- visiting, praying, encouraging. In his desire to get to know each of us, he put 5,000 miles on his car, driving from his home in Troy for Sunday services and to our homes. Jim hopes to have more time in 2020 to be more involved in our lives and the life of the church.

In his **Moderator's Report** Pastor Nate described our emphasis on Discipleship. He desires to equip us to equip others as we continue to be a "Good News People" in our homes, the church, and our communities. He and Bethany are building community through their hospitality on Sunday afternoons as well as through their Young Adult dinners and "Faith, Food, Film" nights. Nate spoke of our growth as being organic: "Churches grow like trees, from the roots up." So the small groups, Tuesday morning and Wednesday night Bible studies, Mom's Group, Seniors' meetings, Spiritual Formation classes, children's ministries and hospitality in our homes all serve to grow us, to help us to reach out with the Gospel of Grace.

Dear Hope Church Family,

Some of you may have heard that Spa is going to be going through a change in leadership soon. This is my 6th year as the administrator, and I have been honored and privileged to serve in this capacity; but God is calling me back to teaching. It is where I feel the closest to God, where I am able to use the skills He has blessed me with to the fullest. I do not know *where* I will be teaching next year, but I do know that God is calling someone else to fill the role of leading Spa as administrator. We just don't know *who* He has planned for that role, yet. Please be in prayer for our search committee and board as they navigate through this job search and seek God's guidance. I'm excited to see what God has in store for both Spa and for me on this next adventure.

As spring approaches (isn't that what the Groundhog told us?), and we look toward the future, I am reminded of God's promise to "be with you wherever you may go" (Joshua 1:9). I am so thankful for a God who isn't too busy for our small school. He's right here, right now, leading us toward His best plans for us. One thing he has led the school to do is focus on prayer. Our students have been going on prayer walks around the school, in partner groups, praying for the needs of each classroom, child, and teacher. It's something they have taken very seriously, as prayer is our way of talking with the Creator of the universe. The faith of a child is so humbling and something I learn from every day.

Speaking of the faith of a child, this morning the children were singing "God's Not Dead" by the Newsboys and I was overcome with such emotion. These little children were practically shouting the truth that "God is not dead, He's surely alive!" AMEN! It's a joy to be able to teach these young ones in a way that the truth of the Gospel can be shared and celebrated.

In order to share that joy with others, on February 12th, from 9-10:30, we had our annual Discovery Day, which is our Open House for Preschool and Kindergarten. It's a great time for parents and children to come and join our program for a chunk of our morning to see our fantastic teachers in action. They then had some time to learn about the specific reasoning behind our early education program, and ask questions. Flyers are pinned on the cork board outside our office, if you'd like to grab a few and pass them along to anyone who may be interested.

Thank you for being prayer partners with us as we continue to strive towards academic excellence, godly character, and a love of learning, while making disciples through God's abundant grace.

Rejoicing in God's Overflowing Goodness,
Mandy Kergel



Extend God's Hope



The Cutler Small Group which meets on Thursday evenings at 7:00 at the Cutler home is just one of the growth and discipleship opportunities that are available to you. Others include "See Jesus" on alternate Tuesday mornings, and Ladies Bible Study and the Thompson Small Group which meet on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 with child care at the church. These are great opportunities for fellowship and growth.



PEOPLE AROUND THE CROSS Lenten Lunch Series

The Village churches of Ballston Spa (Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist & Presbyterian) will hold an ecumenical Lenten lunch series entitled "PEOPLE AROUND THE CROSS" on

Wednesdays during Lent (March 4-April 1)
12:00-1:00 p.m.
at Christ Episcopal Church (15 W. High Street)

All are welcome as we share in a free meal and hear a brief reflection led by the village clergy.

On Wednesday, March 11th Pastor Nate will be sharing the reflection, and Hope Church will provide the meal.



BIRTHDAYS

1	Levi Emerson
7	Betse Smith
8	Pat VanVoorhis
8	Lena Nakhabenko
10	Susie Farinacci
11	Alfred Bouchard
13	Eben Perkins
16	Leona Digges
18	Curtis Galarneau
20	Debbie Cutler
25	Peregrine Perkins
26	Thompson Herrick
28	Terry Cornick

ANNIVERSARIES

14	Thompson Herrick and Reed Sutherland
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**Next Doorway to Hope
Deadline is March 15th.**

DOORWAY TO HOPE STAFF

Sally Jenkins, Nate Thompson, and
Rae Whitehead

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Presbyterian Church in America
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March Calendar