



# Doorway to Hope

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

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

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## My Parting Thoughts

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.....For God is my witness, how I yearn for you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God." (Phil. 1 :3-6, 8-11)

When in January 2013 I met Hope Church's Session, (Ellsworth, Bob, and Jeff), at the Presbytery meeting, who knew what the Lord was up to. There I was, still feeling the sadness and the sting of the abrupt end to a 13 year ministry, and there they (you represented by them) were, just going through a difficult process and painful meeting of sadly bringing to an end a ministry at Hope. Knowing the work of the Church needed to go on, they needed someone to fill the pulpit and so they approached me. The Church, a place of great joys and great sadness

and pain..do we (Susie and I) want to do this again? Really??

Being a closet Presbyterian for several years and wanting to move my ecclesiastical relationship to that type of church polity, we thought, let's give it a try and see what the Lord is doing. After my first Sunday of preaching, I think in April, Ellsworth sent me an email and said he and the Session gave me three "green lights" and would like me to consider a regular ministry of pulpit supply. Really??

August came and my regular preaching cycle began except for once a month when Pastor Mike Alford was needed for the observing of the Lord's Supper. So then I was asked to consider if I would be willing to become a member of the PCA, meet with Presbytery to review my credentials, my ministerial experience, and my doctrinal posi-

tions so I could become "Stated Supply." which meant I would become your pastor until.....Really??

Well, you know the rest of the story, quoting the famous closing lines from Pee Wee Herman's movie, "I know, I lived it!" Something happened to Susie and me along the way; Really?? turned into Really!! because, to borrow a book title from CS Lewis, we were "Surprised by Joy". We did not know what to expect from you and you did not know what to expect from us, but the Lord surprised us with His Love, increasing for Him, and started a new love relationship between Hope Church and us. I know I am loud at times, sometimes a bit crude, sweat a bit more than wanted, and don't stick to



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the "sacred" 20 to 30 minutes allowed to deliver the sermon, but in spite of that, we have grown to love each other. The Lord has allowed us to grow in grace together, which is really so important to hurting people. It is the Gospel that brings us back home, keeps us on the right track, helps us to forget about ourselves and think of others and helps us always bring our compasses back to TRUE North, back to Jesus, our first Love.

Well, "until..." has now come after the long search has ended. Nate Thompson is the one who the Lord has brought to Hope Church to be pastor/shepherd/teacher for Him and you. The Thompson family has moved in and I sense a new love relationship in the making. From what I have learned in my short time with him I see a young man (and family) with a deep faith, academic adeptness, love for the Church, and a heart for ministry bigger than his resume. With only a few weeks left to my formal ministry here, Susie and I are so blessed to have gotten the opportunity to

share our lives with you as much as possible over the past 2+ years. We are not running off or becoming invisible. I am still needed occasionally until the final touches are done on Nate's ordination/installation, so you will see us from time to time.

I chose this quote from Paul's heart to the Philippian Church because this is how we will remember you all. Thank you for your love and affections toward us and our family. I have told the Thompsons and you that I wish my kids could have grown up here at Hope because I know you would have loved them as I see you love other families both in and around the church. So dear brothers and sisters "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy."

Blessings!!

Pastor Jim Farinacci



### **To Pastor Jim: Thanks...and God Bless!**

How can we express adequately our thanks to you, Pastor Jim? You have gone before us with the Torch of the Word, leading us with passion for the veracity and vitality of that Word and into a greater commitment to one another and to the Church as we work that Word into our daily lives. You came to us at a difficult time, when we were discouraged and small. You've helped us to stay strong. You've encouraged our study of the Word. You supported the Pastoral Search Committee, helping to pave the way for a new man. You were open about your own struggles and challenges, thereby encouraging us to be open with one another.

We will continue to pray for you, Jim and Susie, as you seek the Lord for His will for your future. May you be given a time of rest and refreshment even as you continue with your jobs! We love you and your family, and you will always be in our hearts.... AND we're so glad that we will continue to see you as you administer the Sacraments with us each month for the time being! God bless you both!

Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love.  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above....  
When we are called to part,  
It gives us inward pain;  
But we shall still be joined in heart  
And hope to meet again.

Praise God, the search is over! He has sent us a blessing in the form of a young family with passions and visions for His kingdom as well as new growth for our church. Nate and Bethany Thompson are coming most recently from Vestal, NY, where Nate has been pastoring New Hope Church. The Thompsons have both exciting and grieving experiences to share with our church.

Both Nate and Bethany have had positive experiences serving in other countries, such as Madagascar and Mexico, and have spent a great deal of time with children. Nate and Bethany have also taken time to learn about community/church outreach under the wisdom of different mentors and influential teachers in Seminary. They will have much to teach Hope Church, but they will also have much to learn, for there is a wealth of wisdom in our elder population.

In contrast to their experiences abroad, they have also experienced struggle and loss. The Thompsons struggled for a time in a stressful living situation. Then, this past summer, Nate lost his father to cancer, a terrible trauma for him, his family, and his church family. Hope Church, itself, has endured losses and struggles in different circumstances. It is unfortunate that both Nate's family and our own Hope Church family have experienced loss and grief, but shared pain can become the bridge to shared healing.

Nate and Bethany bring along with them two wonderful children, Jonah and Talitha, as well as one on the way! Jonah is quite a social butterfly at 3 years old and loves to engage and share with others. Talitha is one year old and a determined explorer! It will be a great adventure to watch this family grow.

Let us welcome Nate, Bethany, Jonah and Talitha into our family, forging relationships out of the lasting material that is God's everlasting love. Let us bring an atmosphere of peace and joy to our weekly gatherings, and let us venture out of our comfortable routines to invite and embark on this journey together, filling the gaps with prayer.

"Be joyful in hope,  
Be patient in affliction,  
Be faithful in prayer."

Romans 12:12

# Learn God's Word

## Why Creeds and Confessions?

By David W. Hall

Submitted by Jeff Butler

Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ. Jesus responded that His church in all ages would be built upon that realization. The paramount thing confessed was Christ, who is the unique Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16), the cornerstone of the church. However, the means to that end—confessing—is also a very important activity.

Confessing is:

- \* The way to forgiveness of our sins (James 5:16)
- \* How the saved are identified (Rom. 10:10);
- \* The signature that the Spirit is already working in a person (I Cor. 12:3);
- \* The advertisement of our hope (Heb. 10:23);
- \* Accompanied by obedience (2 Cor. 9:13); and
- \* What Christ Himself did (1 Tim 6:13).

As Christians, we must embrace a mature biblical norm of confessing our faith. Let me offer briefly five reasons why a written confession is helpful:

First, written confessions represent maturity. A confessional communion is more than fly-by-night. It is relatively easy to produce a personal statement of faith or a position paper on a narrow subject. However, only those confessions that are tested by many generations endure. Just as yesterday's pop music hardly inspires anymore, so a transient confession is slightly embarrassing. But classic creeds, produced by seasoned Christians, stand the test of time. A confession is a mature, proven set of beliefs. Wouldn't you rather be guided by such a statement than by an ill-defined set of beliefs or an immature statement of faith?

Second, written confessions keep believers from having to reinvent the wheel. Creeds and confessions can put the student at the head of the class in a hurry. If one need not formulate every bit of doctrine himself, that is, if he is humble enough to listen quickly to other saints (James 1:19), he can spare himself considerable time and countless dead ends. He will avoid paths that are "useless to further reconnoiter," as theologian Abraham Kuyper recognized.

Third, written confessions are a non-prejudicial way of telling outsiders what we believe. In an age that craves authenticity and transparency, many people get fed up with value "trust me" statements or calls to give money blindly. A confession is an unashamedly public act; it means that what we believe is neither secret nor windblown for individual tastes. It enables any visitors to find out what we believe.

Fourth, it protects against idiosyncrasy and "movementism"

or following a hero, which often yields chaos, will-worship, self-promoting cults, confusion, or continual flux. A confession is ready-made for all those who want to participate in Christian discipleship that is bigger than their own time.

Fifth, it requires us to repent and give up some of our own wrong notions. One of the reasons that confessions are distasteful to some is their unbending quality. Yet a faith that is twisted to each of my preferences is vacuous. The non-negotiable ethos of a confession may actually force a slacker generation to return to Scripture and steer through some difficult issues. Such may actually help us mature.

As long as a confession is thoroughly biblical (thus timeless) and not provincial, it can aid; a confession in the hands of pastoral and spiritual leaders can vitally serve unity and clarity.

A confession is a faithful echo of what God already says, can guide us and shelter us from the disabilities of an age or locale. Confessions that parrot and lightly amplify the soundings of Scripture endure, while also equipping God's family with strength and perspective to avoid the ditches of every fad or heresy. Confessions that stand on the shoulders of previous saintly exegetes are the advanced courses that settle certain matters and yield a head start.

A confession is also simultaneously shorthand and proven wisdom; it is orthodoxy and orthopraxy at once. Unless one's life span is infinite, when we pray for God to "teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12), confessions will often help us in the stewardship of time as well as protect us from crippling idiosyncrasy.

The purpose of a confession is to bolster both unity and clarity. Many of us learn the hard way that the most damning standards are the unwritten ones. Pharisees, ancient and modern, are masters of using unwritten standards to club the uninitiated into a coma. A biblical confession, however, frees the believing community from these secret laws. It liberates us from self-imposed standards and also makes the church open to all under the same standards.

Kuyper was right to counsel against diverging from fixed confessions until compelled to do so by the Bible. Far from being forbidden, holding to sound confessions is little more than following the New Testament pattern. Rather than contradicting *sola Scriptura*, a confession is actually a sound guide to it.



## Learn God's Word

### **The Apostle's Creed (paraphrased) From Martin Luther's Smaller Catechism**

I believe that God created me, along with all creatures. He gave to me: body and soul, eyes, ears and all the other parts of my body, my mind and all my senses and preserves them as well. He gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and land, wife and children, fields, animals and all I own. Every day He abundantly provides everything I need to nourish this body and life. He protects me against all danger, shields and defends me from all evil. He does all this because of His pure, fatherly and divine goodness and His mercy, not because I've earned it or deserved it. For all of this, I must thank Him, praise Him, serve Him and obey Him. Amen!

I believe that Jesus Christ is truly God, born of the Father in eternity and also truly man born of the Virgin Mary. He is my Lord! He redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, bought and won me from all sins, death and the authority of the Devil. It did not cost Him gold or silver, but His holy, precious blood, His innocent body—His death! Because of this, I am His very own, will live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him righteously, innocently and blessedly forever, just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns forever. Amen!

I believe that I cannot come to my Lord Jesus Christ by my own intelligence or power. But the Holy Spirit called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as He calls, gathers together, enlightens and makes holy the whole Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus in the one, true faith. In this Church, He generously forgives each day every sin committed by me and by every believer. On the last day, He will raise me and all the dead from the grave. He will give eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. Amen!

## **Update from Spa Christian School**

Mandy Klint, Administrator

As always, thank you so much for your continual prayers and support. Our desire this year is to help our students see how special they are in God's eyes. Psalm 139:14 is our year's verse. As you read it, please pray that our students, staff, and families would be filled with awe and wonder in their Creator God, as well as self-respect and purpose. What a loving God we serve!

Over the last two weeks we enjoyed some special guests: Fireman Bob and Paramedic Ray. Our younger students have been studying everyday heroes who keep us safe within our communities. These special guests helped these little ones to see that we don't need to be scared when we hear a siren, but to pray for these heroes as they go and save the day.

This month our students are participating in our Read-a-Thon fundraiser. Parents, grandparents, friends, bus drivers, and even strangers are able to support this fundraiser by sending in a check or going to [gofundme.com/spachristianschool](https://gofundme.com/spachristianschool). The students are encouraged to choose their own adventure as they read a variety of books throughout the month of October. Please be praying that this fundraiser is successful.

At the end of this month our 7th graders will be driving to Lexington, MA for a student leadership conference put on by ACSI. This should be a marvelous time for the class to bond and grow together, as well as push them to the next level in maturity and leadership. We are eager to see these students become individuals the rest of the student body can look up to and strive to be like. Please join us in praying that God would be opening their hearts to hear what He is trying to teach each one through this experience.

The families at Spa Christian are excited to celebrate your new pastor! Congratulations! We look forward to getting to know the Thompson family, as well as the rest of you even better, during our joint work day on Oct. 31st. See you there!



# Interact in Worship



From: **Providence**  
By George Herbert ( 1593-1633)

Of all the creatures both in sea and land,  
Only to man Thou hast made known Thy ways  
And put the pen into his hand,  
And made him secretary of Thy praise.

**Fill the World with Praise**  
By Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

From all that dwell below the skies  
Let the Creator's praise arise;  
Let the Redeemer's name be sung  
Through every land by every tongue.

Eternal are Thy mercies, Lord:  
Eternal truth attends Thy Word;  
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,  
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

In every land begin the song;  
To every land the strains belong:  
In cheerful sounds all voices raise  
And fill the world with loudest praise.

O Lord, in the simplicity of my heart, I offer  
myself to Thee today, to be Thy servant forever,  
to obey Thee, and to be a sacrifice of perpetual praise.

Thomas à Kempis



Two Christmas Poems by Luci Shaw

**Salutation**  
Luke 1:39-45

Framed in light,  
Mary sings through the doorway.  
Elizabeth's six-month joy  
jumps, a palpable greeting,  
a hidden first encounter  
between son and Son.

And my heart turns over  
when I meet Jesus  
in you.

**Night's Lodging**

Across the purple-patterned snow  
laced with light of lantern-glow,  
dappled with dark,  
comes Christ, the Child born from the skies.  
Those are stars that are his eyes.  
His baby face is wise

seen by my candle spark.  
But is he cold from the wind's cold blow?  
Where will he go?

I'll wrap him warm with love,  
well as I'm able,  
in my heart stable.

## Foster Loving Relationships

When the Pastoral Search Committee was working on calling a new pastor we were fortunate to find many materials that were helpful as we anticipated calling the man that God had for Hope Church.

I would like to share with you some of the thoughts that are taken from an article entitled, “On Receiving a New Pastor” written by Dr. Ray Van Neste, Assistant Professor of Christian Studies at Union University. (A complete copy of his article is available on the table in the back of the sanctuary.)

Dr. Van Neste writes: “If you are going to receive a new pastor well, if you are going to be a blessing to him, then you must have a clear, biblical view of what he is supposed to do. Otherwise you might end up giving him a hard time about things which are not his responsibilities or praising him for the wrong things.”

After speaking of the lofty task a man has been called to and for which God will hold him accountable, Dr. Van Neste gives some practical suggestions for receiving and praying for the man that God has called.

**Encourage him in the apostolic priorities:** If he is guarding your souls by preaching the Word to you clearly and fully and is praying for you, then do not make much of other faults. Once you realize how deeply we need such oversight, once you truly yearn for the Word, you will be satisfied to receive it. Martin Luther once said, ‘Those who hunger for the Word will not complain about the platter on which it is served.’ If you find that you are being taught and challenged from the Word don’t worry about the sense of fashion, the way his voice sounds, or whether or not he has completed your to do list. Indeed, far from complaining about these other things, let him know how your soul has been blessed by his labors. Let him know the benefit you receive from his teaching.

**Give him time:** If you do this first item, you must do this second one, for it takes time to earnestly pray and preach. Most people do not realize how much time it

## On Receiving a New Pastor

By Sally Jenkins

takes. Most of us have written a term paper somewhere along the way. Preparing a sermon is like writing a new term paper each week. Sermon preparation will easily consume 10-15 hours per week. If you want to really be fed from the Word, you must give him this time to prepare.

**Give him your ear:** Be like the Bereans who “received the word with great eagerness” (Acts 17:11). If you receive the word with eagerness you will be willing to give him time to preach.

**Give him your prayers:** Paul often asked the churches to pray for him. So in 2 Thess. 3:1-2 he wrote, “Finally, brothers, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified..and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men.” Your pastor will need your prayers as much as you will need his.

**Give him your respect:** Heb. 13:17 “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

**Give him your heart:** Love him and his family.

**Give him your support:** Here I am referring to your financial support. A friend of mine who is a lawyer and a leading layman in his church says you can never approach deliberation about pay for a pastor by asking what his work is worth. When you consider all he does and the eternal significance of it, you could never pay what it is worth. Therefore, the goal of financial support from the church is to remove as many temporal concerns as possible from his life so he can be freed up to do this awesome work.



# Extend God's Hope



Snapshot on Children's Ministry  
By Melanie Combs



This fall not only brings beautiful colors and cooler weather—it brings a new season of Children's Sunday School. The new classes have begun and a big thank you goes to Jill Miller for ordering all the books that were needed, Jill Galarneau for taking on the older elementary group, Rae Whitehead and Hannah Mailloux for taking on the early elementary group, and Pat VanVoorhis for working with the toddlers.

Each Sunday School class has taken on the challenge to put an Operation Christmas Child Shoebox together. Each teacher read the story-book that followed the story of a young boy who receives a box. The hope is that the children will be excited to play a part in helping a child somewhere in the world receive this special gift box. Please be in prayer that this whole process helps each of our children see how God loves children all over the world, not just here in NY.



Eva Anderson Graduates from Children's Church

# Extend God's Hope

## THANKS

Thank you for all who prayed for my mother and me in her many years of Alzheimer's disease. We couldn't have done it without those prayers and God's abundant answers to them. Special thank to the Women's Bible study group, to all who attended Mom's memorial service and for Jill and her many helpers that provided such nice refreshments for the reception after the service.

Mom always enjoyed coming to Hope because people were so nice to her! Now I need prayer for a new ministry!

One of mom's last commentaries on God:

"He has a home!"

"This is not that home!"

"He is the Shepherd!"

And now I take by faith that she resides at THE home of the Good Shepherd!

In His love,  
Lori Johnson



**Newsletter  
Deadline**

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

### DOORWAY TO HOPE STAFF

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

To Our Church Family,

Thank you so much for the love and support you have shown us as we settle in.

We are overwhelmed and humbled by your generosity whether it was cleaning the house, helping with moving in, housewarming gifts, food or the "pounding."

We are so excited to build our home and lives here with you!

In Christ,  
Nate, Bethany  
Jonah, Talitha  
Baby Thompson

## GREETINGS

*Greetings to Hope Church from your long absent deacon and deaconess. Terry and I have been having a wonderful trip but we do miss you and the rest of Hope Church. We greatly enjoyed Sally's time with us for too short a while. Sally updated us on the pastoral search and other Hope news. Internet connections have been intermittent so we are often out of touch but we rejoice that Hope has called a new pastor. We should be home about the time he starts preaching in mid-November.*

*Jim and Terry Cornick*



## BIRTHDAYS

1 Mike Mailloux  
16 Jill Martz  
19 Jonah Thompson

## ANNIVERSARIES

3 Ray and Marybeth Gibbins



Our 3rd Annual Apple Pie Tasting Event was held on Saturday, October 24th following a delicious chicken, sweet corn and baked potato supper. The Cutlers and their team spent much time preparing these tasty things and the corn and potatoes were fresh from the Anderson Farm.

This year's winners of the pie tasting contest judged by Jeff Butler, Jim Farinacci and Nate Thompson were as follows:

1st Place	Fran Jenkins
2nd Place	Ruth Richards
3rd Place Tie	Pat VanVoorhis
	Kelly Coleman
	(Macia Lawrence's Granddaughter)

This was a wonderful time of fellowship together around lots of good food.

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



# Foster Loving Relationships

## “Grace Active” from *The Valley of Vision*

Lord Jesus, Great high Priest, you have opened a new and living way by which a fallen creature can approach you with acceptance. Help me to contemplate the dignity of your Person, the perfectness of your sacrifice, the effectiveness of your intercession.

O what blessedness accompanies devotion, when under all the trials that weary me, the cares that corrode me, the fears that disturb me, the infirmities that oppress me, I can come to you in my need and feel peace beyond understanding! The grace that restores is necessary to preserve, lead, guard, supply, and help me.

And here your saints encourage my hope; they were once poor and are now rich, bound and are now free, tried and now are victorious. Every new duty calls for more grace than I now possess, but not more than is found in you, the divine Treasury in whom all fullness dwells. To you I repair for grace upon grace, until every void made by sin be replenished and I am filled with all your fullness.

May my desires be enlarged and my hopes emboldened, that I may honor you by my entire dependency and the greatness of my expectation. Be with me, and prepare me for all the smiles of prosperity, the frowns of adversity, the losses of substance, the death of friend, the days of darkness, the changes of life, and the last great change of all. May I find your grace sufficient for all my needs.

## “To Be Fit for God” From *The Valley of Vision*

Maker and Sustainer of all things, day and night are yours, heaven and earth declare your glory; but I, a creature of your power and bounty, have sinned against you by resisting the dictates of conscience, the demands of your law, the calls of your gospel; yet I live under the dispensation of a given hope. Deliver me from worldly dispositions for I am born from above and bound for glory. May I view and long after holiness as the beauty and dignity of the soul.

Let me never slumber, never lose my assurance, never fail to wear armor when passing through enemy land. Fit me for every scene and circumstance; stay my mind upon you and turn my trials to blessings, that they may draw out my gratitude and praise as I see their design and effects.

Render my obedience to your will holy, natural, and delightful. Rectify all my principles by clear, consistent, and influential views of divine truth.

Let me never undervalue or neglect any part of your revealed will. May I duly regard the doctrine and practice of the gospel, prizing its commands as well as its promises.

Sanctify me in every relation, office, transaction and condition of life, that if I prosper I may not be unduly exalted, if I suffer I may not be over-sorrowful. Balance my mind in all varying circumstances and help me to cultivate a disposition that renders every duty a spiritual privilege. Thus may I be content, be a glory to you and an example to others.