

Doorway to Hope

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

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

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You and I Need to be Catechized!

Imagine yourself a missionary working in a culture where there is no biblical knowledge of God and no alphabet. Even if you could translate the Bible into the local language, no one knows how to read. So how do you teach and train new believers to come to faith in Jesus? This is where John Paton, the 19th century missionary to cannibals in Vanuatu found himself. Some men, women and children expressed an interest in Paton's God but knew almost nothing about their Creator. He could have told them that Jesus died for their sins. But that causes more questions: Who is Jesus? What is sin? Why should I care anyway when my neighbor wants to eat me?

Fast forward about 100 years to inner city gang-infested Philadelphia. A young pastor had a very successful children's ministry. Hundreds would attend on Saturdays. What was their curriculum? The old catechisms: *Westminster Shorter Catechism* and the *Catechism for Young Children*. When the pastor was asked, "Why in the world would you not just give them the basic gospel message?" Here was his answer:

These kids know nothing whatsoever about God, or Jesus, or sin. They've never even heard the words, except as curse words. We're building a framework in their minds of words and ideas and con-

cepts, so that when we do tell them about sin and the Savior who came to die for it, there is a way for them to understand what we are saying.

Are you starting to see the value of being catechized? It helps give us a framework and a vocabulary to understand what the Bible teaches about Jesus and the Gospel. It's personal (teaching through questions and answers and discussions), it's practical (learning the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments), it is doctrinal (learning who God is from the Apostle's Creed) and it is often devotional (leading us to praise and worship for God's grace and kindness towards us). Listen to the words of Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #1 and the Heidelberg Catechism Question #1:

WSC #1 – What is the chief end of man?

A. *The chief end of man is to glorify*

God and enjoy Him forever.

HC#1 – What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. *That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.*

Your purpose in life is to make God known and experience the joy of being known by Him. And you are completely and utterly loved by this God down to the individual hairs on your head. You are untouchably

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safe in Christ because of what Your faithful Savior accomplished on the cross. Has your heart been warmed by these truths? You can turn these into prayers, conversations, confessions of sin and teaching opportunities with your children and neighbors.

Don't take my word for it. It's Biblical. Catechism comes from a Greek word, *katecheo*, which means to systematically teach by word of mouth. Consider Luke 1:4. Luke tells us that he is writing his Gospel in order that Theophilus would have certainty regarding his 'catechism', what he was taught. Galatians 6:6 describes the pastor as the one who catechizes. Through prescription and description, the Bible assumes that you and I need to be catechized. It is found at the core of the church's mission in Matthew 28: "Go and make disciples who have been taught everything Jesus commanded." Therefore the purpose of catechism is to drive the good news of the gospel into our hearts in order to strengthen our "doctrine, devotion, duty and delight" in the God who would send His only beloved Son and pour out His Spirit of love in our hearts.

One other quick example. John Newton, the author of the hymn Amazing Grace, wrote some of the most doctrinally tender letters I've ever read. They are full of wisdom, grace and truth. By age four, he could repeat all 107 Westminster Shorter Catechism Questions, with the Scripture texts and all Isaac Watt's smaller Catechisms and his children's hymns. God used this doctrinal framework to bring this famous prodigal home as an adult because of the seeds his mother and church planted as a child.

We find ourselves once again in a world where people are Biblically ignorant, despite the average home having 4.4 Bibles. And there is no agreement on these questions: Who is God? What's wrong with me? How can religion be good news? So I am challenging you to join me on this journey of catechesis with your family. It's something that takes practice. You may start and stop and start again. But I pray that you will be surprised to see what God does with His truth. It may just set you free!



Help for Victims of the Hurricanes

The Mission to North America Disaster Relief page on Facebook begins with Isaiah 58:10-12

...if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

For now, MNA Disaster Relief suggests that we do the following to offer help and support:

1. **Pray**
2. **Give** The money will be used for assessment, mobilization, relief grants to flooded PCA families and churches, supplies and equipment, construction of Sheds of Hope, set-up and operation of flood recovery sites.
3. **Send Relief, Supplies and Equipment** (Check on Facebook for specifics, such as Flood Buckets that are stored in an MNA Disaster Relief warehouse.)
4. **Prepare to GO** (It is important that volunteers register with the MNA Disaster Response for Mobilization.)

Interact in Worship



Snapshot on Children's Ministry
By Melanie Combs



School time is here!! As kids are going back to their schooling programs, we are gearing up for Sunday School here at Hope Church. We have some exciting things happening.

If your children are going into 2nd through 5th grade Mrs. Galarneau will be taking them on an adventure through **Pilgrim's Progress**. This is an amazing story, and if you have never read it, I hope your children will be telling you all about it. If you have read the story, what great conversations you will be able to have with your child! The hope is your child will be able to consistently come to Sunday School so he/she can keep up with the story and all there is to learn from it.

If your child is going into 6th through High School Nick Cutler will be taking them on a journey to learn about God's Promises and The Covenant. Here is a great description right from the Great Commissions Publications website:

Students will look at various aspects of the covenant God made with his people. They will find the

intense practicality of his promise to be our God. Part of the covenant exploration will include learning how Jesus as Savior fulfills God's covenant. When the Bible speaks of covenant it is talking about the way God relates to his people. The covenant is an agreement in which a sovereign God promises to be our God, the one who cares for us and provides for us. In turn, He insists that we faithfully keep all the requirements of his covenant. However, we are heirs of Adam's sinful nature and are incapable of obeying God's covenant. But God is gracious! His covenant centers around his greatest promise - the promise that he would send his only Son Jesus to be our substitute to fulfill all the requirements of the covenant. Jesus alone kept the requirements of the covenant. He bore in his own body the penalty for covenant breaking by dying on the cross for his people

If your children are in preschool through 1st grade, they will be taught each week by Hannah Mailloux and Rae Flint.

The Children's Church program will continue going through the Bible with the Gospel Project.

Thank you to all the volunteers that faithfully work with the children each week. You are a blessing to all of us. Our hope is that parents will enjoy looking through the papers and lessons the children do and reinforce the learning at home.

Another program parents should be aware of is the Children's Catechism that will be part of our Courtyard Celebration each morning starting September 10. Each Sunday morning at 10 am sharp the children will be introduced to the day's catechism question and answer and learn a song to help them remember it. The question and answer will also be printed on the children's sermon note papers as an extra help. Please have your children bring those sermon note papers HOME each week so they can study the question and answer and sing the song to really learn the catechism. And as always, if your child's work on the notes is something they'd like to see on the next Sunday morning's Power Point Projection, please let Melanie get a copy of them before you bring them home.



Spa Christian School is up and running, for its 36th year! We welcome students, parents, staff and faculty. We're thankful we can share our building and grounds, and our prayers are with you all!

Interact in Worship

God Grant Us Grace

To Those among us who are aging (aren't we all?), and to those who have aging parents.

Today Mom and I dismantled their little tree, taking down the ornaments for the last time in the home that has been theirs for over 60 years. Christmas tree ornaments have much significance. Some were made by the children 50 years ago, some by the grandchildren. There are a few left from Mom's childhood home in Whitestone, probably 80 years old: fragile Santas and bells with paint worn off, delicate as soap bubbles. Mom will be in an assisted-living facility next year, and Dad probably will not be here. So Mom is trying to decide which ornaments to keep, which to give away. "And I want that nice young couple that's getting married soon to have those..You can have what you want from this box."

We will all come to this place of divesting ourselves of our stuff. Little by little, the clinging objects fall away, until only the essence is left of each of us. What is really important? God usually, in the normal course of life, gives us time to unburden ourselves gradually. I've seen this long process happening in Dad's life. He had always been the head of the home, the strong leader and the setter of the pace. As he aged, he gave to his children gradually the responsibilities: the deed to the cabin in the woods, the tractor no longer used by him to haul the logs he had cut, the snow-blower, the lawnmower. And now he shuffles in his walker from bed to table to couch. He reads awhile, then his head sags and he sleeps. Peacefully, thank God.

Will we be ready when the time comes to "shuffle off this mortal coil"? God grant us grace to age gracefully, to let go, to be willing to endure pain and shortness of breath and all of the indignities that go with a body that no longer works. And God grant us grace now to be patient with our aging parents and friends and to continue to afford them the respect and love and honor that they, as God's precious children, deserve and need. Like the little children, they are the vulnerable ones whom Jesus calls to himself. They are "the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven."

—Rae Whitehead

DOORWAY TO HOPE STAFF

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

As we consider the "divesting" we must all do in our lifetimes, we think of the victims of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma and the millions of refugees around the world. They have had to "give up" in dramatic fashion. Yet we all must learn to give up, at some point, health, youth, dreams, relationships, wealth. I'd like to share a poem by Jane Hess Merchant, whom my mom discovered in the '90's, who lived with a debilitating illness, which instead of embittering her, gave authenticity and power to her words. My mother wrote: "I've been discovering a new poet. She was born in 1920 and died in 1972, Methodist, from a farm family who lost their farm in the drought years of the 1930's (I well remember those) and the depression years. She experienced the Civil Rights struggle, the wars, the assassinations of Kennedy and King, the whole gamut of our lives, and she was hardly able to move outside her bedroom in Knoxville, TN, because she had...an illness in which bones are so brittle they break with the slightest pressure. But she was so outgoing, sensitive, dedicated to truth and beauty and God, so determined not to let her gift go unused that a reader would not suspect she was handicapped."

The Wall with a Window

In a certain sullen wall
That shuts the spacious world from view
Chance—or miracle—has made
A space for looking through;

A little blessed window space
Through which imprisoned eyes may see
An upward-going leafy road,
A tiny flowering tree;

And, growing close and pressing inward
Through the window in the wall,
Sprays of blossoms shaped to music,
White and sweet and small.

In whatever walls surround us,
Stubborn walls of grief or pain,
Barred by gates that will not open
While our lives remain,

God's love is a window, showing
Us a wide and leafy land,
And His mercy, bell-like, blossoms
Sweetly close at hand.

Foster Loving Relationships

Camp H.O.P.E. Celebrates Its Sixth Season!

The summer's culmination: a trip to the mountains...to the seashore...or maybe to the lake? For many of us, it has become Hope Church's summer reading program: Camp H.O.P.E. (Healthy Options for Play and Education)! We had been thinking of it, off and on, for months. The theme had been chosen last year: farming—"Books in the Barnyard." We create our own curriculum every year, so we keep a look-out during the year for materials and curriculum ideas. We gather books, stickers, stuffed animals; we scrounge garage sales and attics for appropriate puzzles and toys. I scour my brain, too, for songs, poems, and activities appropriate to six-year-olds. (Each teacher knows the year before, the age-level he/she will be teaching.) And we leave space in our calendars, before as well as during the camp week, to prep "our" classrooms and our minds and hearts.

Camp H.O.P.E. really kicks off on the Sunday of the Family Fun Fair sponsored by the Village of Ballston Spa in late June. That's when the teachers and staff set up a booth advertising the camp. Because of the interactive games at our booth, we're able to talk with parents who bring their children to the fair. We tell them that the purpose of the camp is to help children going into grades one through five to enjoy reading. It's to get them excited about books: to spur them on with fun ways to review skills learned the previous year and to give them a boost for the year to come. Mostly, it's to help children to learn to love to read!

Of course, I'm just giving you a picture of Camp H.O.P.E. prep from a teacher's point of view; but our whole congregation is involved! Providing ideas and food, advertising, lifting and carrying, decorating, crafting, leading games, giving nursery and nursing care, providing for and attending the Friday picnic—all are done by all of us! Our teens are involved, and our older children and alumni of previous years have become aides. Melanie is our fearless leader, and she soldiers on every year, providing guidance, supervision and hours and hours and hours of work as well as writing the lyrics to thematic songs, leading the large-group sessions and teaching her own class.

This year's farm theme was especially fun, as our farm families provided animals for the camp! Every day new animals appeared on the church lawn, where the Andersons had set up a pen. A mother hen with thirteen newly-hatched chicks spent the entire week in the church! (How we all loved watching the chicks beneath the hen's protective wings, occasionally sticking little heads out from their shelter!) The Andersons brought a cow and a calf, guinea hens, geese, piglets, roosters! Tammy driving her truck and animal trailer, to unload the animal of the day, was a daily sight. Eben contributed his mini-Rex rabbit named Shadow, and the Perkins family brought chickens. So the campers were able to write about farms, draw pictures of farms, write and read and listen to stories about farms, sing about them and make crafts about farms. Special thanks go to camp graduates Colin and Eben, who were our animal experts!

This year we instituted a service project: the children brought in loose change every day, with the boys and girls having separate collection baskets. Throughout the week, each tried to out-give the other. By Friday, the girls had given more, and their "champion," Bethany Thompson, had the privilege of "honeying and feathering" Pastor Nate, the boys' "Champion," at the picnic! As we all cheered, he became one sticky, feather-y mess! \$240 was collected to buy books for the YMCA child-care center in Malta!

Every year at Camp H.O.P.E. is unique, and each is special, as the campers will agree. This year I noticed that the burden of work was carried by more people, and that there seemed to be more "ownership" in the camp by the congregation. We are thankful! Thank you, Melanie, for your tireless work and leadership—and thank you to all who were involved in our summer outreach!

—Rae Whitehead



Foster Loving Relationships

Camp HOPE Recap and Thanks

Another August, another Camp HOPE! What a great year we had with Books in the Barnyard! We had 36 registrants that signed in during the course of the week. The children really enjoyed all the barnyard animals and the barnyard feel of the place all week!

There was quite an exciting contest with Nate or Bethany on point to be honeyed and feathered. The boys and girls competed to bring the most money in to benefit the YMCA - Malta childcare program. Both groups brought in \$240 throughout the week. The girl's team brought in the most which meant Pastor Nate was honeyed and feathered on Friday at our Camp HOPE Community Picnic.

I want to extend a sincere thank-you to all of you for your thoughts, prayers, donations, and help during the week. We couldn't do it without you. It was wonderful to see so many Hope Church people at the picnic as well. A HUGE thank you goes to Tammy and Colin Anderson and family for all the work it took to bring all the animals and equipment each day. A HUGE thank you also goes to Fred Richards for the care and dedication he took to build sets and set up the tent and to generally bless the program so dynamically each year. Both these families really helped make the week so special! Thank you to the teachers, staff, aides, and all that came help set up and take down decorations. We are looking forward to having fun with a Splash of Reading next year!

—Melanie Combs



As you know, Camp HOPE's theme this year was "Books in the Barnyard." So, every day I got to bring a different farm animal. Monday was rabbits. I brought two different breeds and Eben Perkins brought his rabbit. Tuesday I brought chickens, baby ducks and two geese. The best part was that one of my chickens had 13 baby chicks hatch the day before. It was perfect timing! It was so cute to watch the mom try to cover up all 13 chicks and you could see them popping their heads out by her wings. On Wednesday we brought two baby pigs, Thursday, sheep, and on Friday, the final day, we brought a cow and her calf along with a sheep and ducks. Mama hen and her babies stayed the week with the bunnies in the church foyer for everyone to see each morning. I had help from some of my 4-H friends, Eben Perkins, and Lilly and Morgan Ryder.

—Colin Anderson



Camp Hope was amazing. My family got to bring in all the animals. I was in Miss Combs' class. She was nice. We got to feed her guinea pig. We also made books. Mine was about pigs. I called it Plump Pigs. My favorite activity was games and snacks. Camp Hope was a lot of fun.

—Eva Anderson

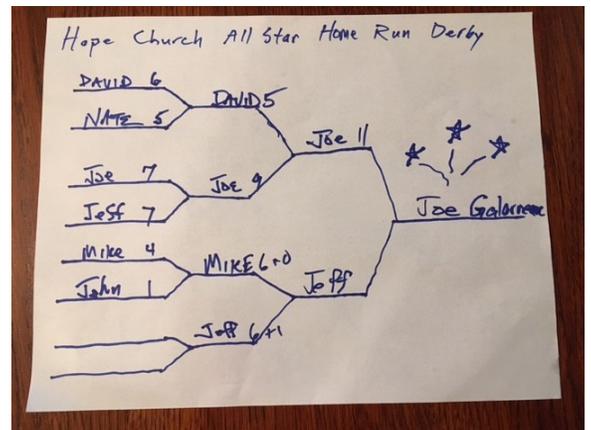
Foster Loving Relationships



Summer is a time for Camp Fires and informal times of fellowship. Here we see the Thompson Family hosting the HOPE for Seniors group for a campfire and s'mores. This is just one of the many groups that were able to enjoy the hospitality of Nate, Bethany, Jonah, Talitha and Ezra!

And then there was the Men's Retreat led by Pastor Nate. The men enjoyed the good food, fellowship and time of teaching on "How the Gospel Restores Men in the Church and in the Home."

As part of the activities they had a whiffle ball tournament in the Cornick's home which brought forth a lot of laughs and camaraderie. Joe Galarneau was the Home Run King for this year's retreat.



Extend God's Hope

Letter to the Editor Ballston Journal On Line

We Condemned Hate. Now What?

As a relative newcomer to Ballston Spa, I was encouraged to hear of the recent anti-racism resolution adopted by our village board. Hate and bigotry should be condemned in all its forms. And even though the horrific events of Charlottesville, Virginia seem far away, I see the resolution as an opportunity for our community to be proactive about our own prejudices.

Full disclosure: I am a white minister in an evangelical Christian denomination (Presbyterian Church – PCA) that publicly failed to address racism and hate in its past. It is a part of our shame. When Martin Luther King Jr. was calling for justice to roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Amos 5:24), he was demanding that white Christians care about justice for their African American neighbors with the same ferocity as the God of the Bible. Unfortunately, his pleas for us to stand for Biblical justice fell on willfully deaf ears. Some of our Presbyterian churches would publicly say hate is ‘anti-Christian’ but maintained the anti-Biblical ‘separate but equal’ doctrine in practice. Did you read or see “The Help?” Many of the racist white characters were based on real evangelical Presbyterian pastors and parishioners. Lord have mercy!

Before moving to Mississippi to study for the pastorate, I naively assumed that because I come from the North, racism was mainly a Southern problem. It is arro-

gant, I know. Apologies to my Southern friends! Even as I write these words memories of hate come flooding back. To my shame, I remember *my silence* as racial slurs were regularly slung at my Korean teacher’s back. I remember a Middle-Eastern teammate in high school being kicked while on the basketball court because he was a “towel-head.” I remember the n-word being flung like mud at my fellow athletes competing in mainly white towns. These were not events below the Mason-Dixon line in the 1960’s. They took place regularly in small towns in Western New York. We have harmful partialities too!

Ballston Spa, “A Village of Friends”

Now that we have publicly declared that hate has no place in Ballston Spa, to which we should all heartily agree, where do we go from here? I propose that a helpful beginning would be this recognition: Pride and prejudice

are here among us. We may not have people screaming on street corners for a fictional white-only utopia, but it is here, lurking in the shadows. Racism is no respecter of geographical borders. You will find it wherever you find people. And let’s call it what it is. Evil! To my horror I find it lurking in the shadows of my own heart, silently thinking the world would be better if they were like me!

This is where the Christian story is helpful and corrective to white supremacy and my own biases.

When I see Jesus, a dark-skinned Middle Eastern man who died for his multi-ethnic enemies not because of their goodness but solely due to His compassion and mercy, I must own my part in it. I was one of those enemies. And I must see that Jesus’ invitation to his kingdom is to be a part of a multi-colored family, full of people not like me.

So going forward when we see two sides screaming and pointing fingers in what may be justifiable anger or just plain ole’ hatred, we need to hear Jesus’ words towards unjustified malice, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” His compassion motivates painful honesty. Then perhaps we will move towards each other, confessing our shared humanity and the pain our prejudices have caused our neighbors.

We are a diverse religious community so you may not believe the Christian story. But these days we need courageous people of differing worldviews to truly make Ballston Spa, “A Village of Friends.” My hope is that our local churches will both condemn hatred and humbly confess with me, “I like me and people like me too much.” So in the words of Herman Melville, the author of **Moby Dick**, “Heaven have mercy on us all - Presbyterians and Pagans alike - for we are all somehow dreadfully cracked about the head, and sadly need mending.” Now I’m ready to listen to you!

Nate Thompson, Pastor
Hope Church
Ballston Spa, NY



Operation Christmas Child



Once again, Hope Church will be participating in the Operation Christmas Child Project that will bring hope and enjoyment to children at Christmas time.

Operation Christmas Child is an international relief project of Samaritan's Purse of which Franklin Graham is the President.

HOW YOU CAN HELP WITH THE PROJECT:

On October 8th and 15th you will be able to pick up your shoebox in the church foyer.

**Decide whether you will pack a box for a girl or a boy,
And the age category: 2-4, 5-9, or 10-14.**

Fill the box with a variety of quality gifts that will bring delight to a child.

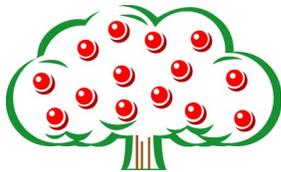
All shoeboxes need to be in by November 5th
so they can be brought to the
nearest drop off point during National Collection Week.

A donation of \$9 per box is critical to transport each shoebox and deliver it to a child in need.

You may place your donation money inside
or on the top of your shoebox.

If you would like to make an additional
donation to the project, please write your
check to Hope Church and put OCC in the memo.

**Most importantly, we need to be praying for the children who will be receiving these shoeboxes.
Thank you for helping with this project.**



**Apple Picking Outing
Saturday, October 7th**

**Covered Dish
Luncheon after Church
October 8th**

Featuring your favorite apple desserts.

Plan on joining us.

CONGRATULATIONS

Phyllis and Bob Piester will be celebrating their 67th Anniversary on September 23rd. May God continue to bless your lives and marriage!



**Newsletter
Deadline**

Next Doorway to Hope Deadline
is November 15th.



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- 15 Colin Anderson
- 15 Edmund Perkins
- 15 Bethany Thompson
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- 22 Isaac Bodine
- 24 Dan Anderson
- 26 Talitha Thompson



- 5 Mike and Sandy Mailloux
- 5 Norm and Natalie Jones
- 23 Micah and Nichole Bodine
- 26 Dan and Tammy Anderson

RETIREMENT

Congratulations to Dave Martz as he anticipates his retirement from the New York State Department of Transportation at the end of October.

SYMPATHY

Our hearts and prayers are with Sally Jenkins, whose mom, Lillian Deming, went to be with her Lord on July 27th. We love you, Sally!

Hope Church
Presbyterian Church in America
206 Greenfield Avenue
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Fair Time

This summer I showed animals in two fairs. First was Saratoga County Fair. I was really busy showing cows, sheep, chickens, geese, rabbits, and guinea pigs. It was a really busy week, and I spent it at the fair in my grandmother's camper. It was an awesome week and I won lots of ribbons and trophies. A few weeks after Saratoga County Fair I chose to bring three sheep to the Altamont Fair with an older 4-H friend. This was my first time showing at another fair. At Altamont I had to show my sheep in open judging against several adults showing their sheep. My bigger sheep Tunis Ram took Grand Champion of breed. It was a great experience being at another fair and nice to make some money. I hope to do Altamont Fair again.

—Colin Anderson