

# Hope Presbyterian Church

617 Hope Chapel Rd., Lakewood, NJ 08701

732-364-8318 [www.LakewoodHope.org](http://www.LakewoodHope.org)



## Mission Study May 2020

### OUR BELIEF

As a Christian community attempting to follow the word of God, we believe that Jesus is Lord and Savior and head of the church, and the Holy Spirit provides guidance for our daily lives. We believe that Christ has redeemed us through His death and resurrection. Having been loved and forgiven by God's grace, we believe Christ leads us to love and forgive one another. As ministers of God we are commanded to tell the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### OUR MISSION

1. Share with the community our love of God and the grace He has bestowed upon us in Jesus Christ through local mission efforts, developments of programs for the retiree and ecumenical activities.
2. Share with the congregation our love of God and His love for us through small groups enjoying Christian fellowship, stewardship education, and improved communications. -Increase our opportunities

for worshipful experiences by developing alternate worship services, expanding the music program, and by offering retreats.

3. Increase our opportunities to reach many young people in our congregation and community by enriching and expanding Christian education programs for children, youth, and young adults.

## **OUR VISION**

1. Our congregation's vision for ministry Energized and rooted in weekly worship, Sunday school, adult Bible study as well as regular fellowship and service opportunities, parishioners seek to be faithful disciples in everything we do outside the confines of the church. Young children participate in Sunday school before worship and are then offered quality time during a children's chat in the worship service. These young ones are also empowered to be faithful disciples in all that they do when they leave the sanctuary. The church's website and Facebook postings offer other avenues of the church's vision for ministry lived out in the world.

2. We feel called to reach out to address the emerging needs of our community and constituency. Having stood the test of time for more than a century and a quarter located at the convergence of four growing and developing towns, Hope Presbyterian Church continues to offer an unwavering faith in the face of constant change. The rich history of this congregation and its forefathers and foremothers is a testimony to God's calling people to this particular place. Although the faces and names of the families have changed over time, commitment to faithful witness and ministry has remained strong. As members of Hope Presbyterian Church, we share and live out faith stories at work and in our families. Discernment often dictates and inspires new ways of serving others in addition to; providing back packs and student supplies for needy children in our local elementary schools; filling pantry shelves for needy veterans at a local Vet Center; welcoming and housing out-of- state volunteers to the Mission House for continued faithful work on 2012 Superstorm Sandy recovery.

3. Our position can help us to reach Our vision and mission goals Strong leadership provides a visible catalyst which inspires, empowers, and equips disciples to discover, explore, and live out their gifts and talents in modeling the ministry of Jesus Christ. Regular interpretation of scripture in worship, in prayer, and in Bible Study strengthens church members for service with and for others. Paying particular attention to identify and increase awareness of the community's needs and help us find ways to address these needs, offers an avenue of prayerful and thoughtful response.

4. These are the characteristics needed by the person who is open to being called to this congregation. This person needs to exhibit these characteristics: kindness; gentleness; love; compassion; inspiration; leadership; good listener; able to give and take constructive criticism. This person can also help the congregants to; celebrate the history of the church community; name and begin to heal and reconcile any existing conflict; open us up to look at the future; and offer us meaningful ministry time as we move forward.

5. The specific tasks, assignments, and program areas this person will have responsibility for. The premier tasks for this person include prepare and lead weekly and occasional liturgical season worship services; moderate monthly Session meetings; provide pastoral care such as hospital visits and home communion; and lead weekly Bible Study and bi-annual confirmation class. It is understood that this

position will be part-time at 25 hours per week. Session leaders will continue responsibility for children and youth programs as well as mission, stewardship, property concerns and more.

## **OUR HISTORY**

### **History in Brief**

Hope Presbyterian Church held its first session meeting as a Presbyterian Church on May 15, 1888. It began as a mission effort of the Holmanville Presbyterian Church of Jackson and the First Presbyterian Church of Lakewood. The charter membership consisted of seventeen men and women from the local area. The original sanctuary that stands on the west side of Hope Chapel Road was started circa 1879. Our history tells us it took about seven years to complete the structure for use. It stands on property that was donated, constructed of primarily donated materials, and with predominantly volunteer labor. As the congregation grew and time progressed, the existing Fellowship Hall was constructed opposite the church on the east side of Hope Chapel Road. It was later that the Fellowship Hall was moved to its current site, to allow for the construction of the existing dwelling, now opposite the original sanctuary. In the ensuing years much stayed the same at this location. Maintenance was done, the carriage house area was removed, the outhouse was eliminated, and the kitchen was rebuilt by adding on to the Fellowship Hall. Otherwise, the three original structures stand as they did when constructed.

The congregation went through many ups and downs through the years. Their perseverance was guided by their faith in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Membership grew and shrank, but throughout it all, our founders and those that followed showed their love of God in the ministry they accomplished. Hope has always supported those that have come through its doors. Services have been held regularly and Christian Education for adults and children has always been a priority.

### **Building Use Task Force Former.**

In the mid-1980s the session decided to evaluate the use of the facilities. From this, the Building Use Task Force was formed. This short-term committee was chaired by elder James Marks. The committee consisted of a representative group of session and congregational members. A study of the groups using the facilities, the condition of the structures, and the intended purposes of the buildings was conducted. The outcome was that Fellowship Hall was serving as a Christian Education facility on Sunday mornings and only used by the Church community on a limited basis otherwise. The manse, in need of some repair, was serving as a meeting room facility until the arrival of our pastor and then was turned back into housing. The Church sanctuary was used mostly for its intended purpose - worship services, weddings, memorial services, congregational meetings, etc. But this also was on a limited basis. This was due to the lack of restroom facilities, very warm summers and cold winters, and the size not being conducive to small group gatherings. These results were reported to Session. About this time, Monmouth Presbytery had commissioned a study for new church development in the Ocean County Area. In the summer of 1988, with a copy of their report, our Session established a second committee to review the information.

### **Genesis Committee Formed**

This second committee was named the Genesis Committee and was instructed to deal with the possibility of new beginnings. This committee was co-chaired by elders Vera Layton and Laura Johnson. They were assisted again by a representative group from the session and congregation. The report

which Presbytery had commissioned contained a recommendation for a new church in northeast Jackson Township. As Hope is awfully close to this area, it was of considerable concern. Much discussion followed. Should we redevelop and relocate? Should we stay at our current location and do what we can? The committee evaluated these questions. They also conducted a congregational survey for individual responses to these questions. They held discussion meetings with representatives of Monmouth Presbytery. The outcome, after prayerful consideration, was that the congregation most supported staying at the current site. It was felt that our ministry was serving a cross section of three townships, due to our being in northwest Lakewood and in close proximity to northeast Jackson and southwest Howell. However, the redevelopment of our facilities to meet our current and future needs was deemed to be a priority.

### **Redevelopment Committee Formed**

With the report from the Building Use Task Force and The Genesis Committee, the session, in the summer of 1989, decided to establish a Redevelopment Committee. It was given the responsibility to develop and implement a plan for the renovation and/or replacement of our existing facilities, to meet the needs of our ministry. Elder Robert Miller was asked to chair the committee and given the directive to pick a representative committee of church members. The committee was to consist of no less than seven and no more than eleven in number. Elder Miller eagerly accepted. The committee was formed and had its first meeting on October 8, 1989. Serving on the committee were James Marks (Vice-Chair), Vera Lawton (Secretary), Laura Johnson, Joan Harrington, Carol Urm, Jacquie Rivier, Robert Kayser, Allan Strauss, and Thomas Rohrer.

### **With the Task at Hand**

As any can imagine, a great deal of research and discussion was begun. The session established a redevelopment fund to accept contributions for the work that needed to be done. With the authorization of session, possible property acquisitions were investigated. As research and contact continued, it was evident that we would not be able to acquire property from the Lakewood Country Club to add to the church building lot. Property on the east side of Hope Chapel Road was investigated, however the asking prices were not within our reach at the time. The recommendation thus began developing on the east side of the road on property that we already had. This in itself would eliminate the hazard to the congregation and our children of crossing the ever increasingly busy roadway. With the decision to redevelop at this location made, sketches for moving and expanding the old building were made. Robert Miller and James Marks were authorized to meet with representatives of Monmouth Presbytery to discuss our plans and present our plan to be a "developing church". Presbytery was supportive of the concept and Hope Presbyterian Church was deemed a redeveloping congregation at a stated meeting of Presbytery. The committee proceeded and contracted with an architect to develop plans for the expansion of the relocated church. Along with this, the committee obtained some preliminary figures for the moving and reconstruction of the original sanctuary. It proved not to be cost-effective to move the old building and renovate it.

The committee suffered a major setback with the passing of chair Robert Miller in the beginning of 1994. After a few months, the committee grouped and revisited the plans. The committee recommended that a campaign to develop financial support for the project (over \$400,000) be conducted. church Financial Campaign Services of the Presbyterian Church USA was contracted with to lead us in this effort. The campaign resulted in generous support for the project with pledges in excess

of \$180,000 over the three-year period from January 1996 through December 1998. Meeting with a funding representative of the Synod of the Northeast, the recommendation was made to contact Barden & Robeson of New York for a quote to help design and construct a new facility. A "Site Plan" was necessary and a member of the church, John Wuestneck, P.E. of the firm of Lynch, Giuliano & Associates of Brick, NJ agreed to draw up the plan. In February of 1996, Barden & Robeson was contracted to develop preliminary drawings based upon sketches supplied by the Redevelopment Committee. With the preliminary plans done, cost figures were developed. The preliminary estimate came in at around \$300,000 for a basic building, plus site work. This put the projected cost at \$438,000. This was presented to Session and approved to be presented to the congregation. In June of 1996, the congregation voted to have session obtain the mortgages for the project. Funding was applied for through the Presbyterian Church USA, with a \$230,000 loan from General Assembly and \$200,000 loan from PNC Bank, backed by the Synod of the Northeast and Monmouth Presbytery. With everything appearing to fall into place, the ground-breaking ceremony was held on September 29, 1996. After receiving the necessary approvals, the actual construction began with the clearing, land preparation, and foundation work in February 1997. Funding had not arrived at that time, but session authorized the commencement of the foundation with funds from the redevelopment fund. Shortly after, the funding became available and we were underway.

During the course of the planning and implementation of the project, the committee also underwent some changes. Some committee members that began in 1989 decided to move their energies to other aspects of the church life. With the vacancies, new people joined in the vision of the new facility. The committee, however, has stayed at the session mandated size of between seven and eleven. It currently consists of James Marks (Chair), Jacquie Revier (Vice-Chair), Vera Lawton, (Secretary), Laura Johnson, Carol Urm, Lea Miller, Joyce Miller, Carol Carpenter, Thomas Hayes, Robert Kayser, and John Wuestneck. As you can see, more than half of the original members are still serving.

### **Building Briefs**

The actual design of the building was a compromise of many ideas from the committee and members of the church. Usable space on the plot of land had to be considered. The building was developed with the required setbacks in mind. We sketched a two-level building to utilize a conservative footprint, but also allow us the room to have a new sanctuary, meeting rooms, and classroom space for Christian Education. The overall design is somewhat traditional and keeps in mind the architecture of the original church building and the other structures on the site. It seemed most appropriate to develop a structure that would blend in with its surroundings.

The lower level was designed with five 14foot x 18foot meeting rooms, in addition to the large Fellowship Room. This larger room is sized to eventually be divided into three additional meeting rooms. Our plan is to utilize folding wall systems. This will allow for the smaller rooms when needed and still leave the larger room available for those functions that require more space. The large gatherings will still be held in the Fellowship Hall. The lower level also contained the mechanical rooms for the furnaces, etc. The heating and air conditioning were designed as zone systems, allowing heating, and/or cooling of the areas that are in use without having to heat or cool the entire building.

The upper level was designed around the sanctuary. With the choir room and emergency stairs at the west end, the church offices, library, and restroom were located at the east end. The entry was designed with a multipurpose use. Though called the gathering area on the plans, it can also serve as overflow

seating and as a place to tend to crying children, if need be. These are, like the large room downstairs, wired for the sound system to allow those that wish to listen to the service when unable to be in the sanctuary.

As said previously, the building had been wired and has a sound system in all levels to carry the music and spoken word to those that wish to listen. Portable headphones are available for use by those that need assistance. Other items were also pre-wired including a local area computer network, TV antenna and/or cable TV. Conduits have been installed in a couple of areas, to enable other wiring in the future. A central vacuum for maintenance was also installed.

Accessibility was another matter that was discussed. The cost and maintenance of an elevator was researched. The initial outlay was above what our budget would allow at the time. Recognizing the need for all to have access, ramps were designed and have been installed to both levels of the building. The only drawback is that one may have to go outside and re-enter the downstairs via the rear ramp.

The Development Committee started with a goal to plan a facility that would meet our current and some future needs. It is felt that what has been developed will accomplish that goal. Though not a perfect structure, it contains many of the items that were deemed essential throughout the committee deliberations. This overall plan has eliminated the safety hazard of crossing Hope Road, and provided educational space, offices, a larger sanctuary, and restrooms, all in a central location. It has the ability to be filled, giving us the opportunity to grow. It has been constructed as a somewhat low maintenance, cost-effective structure. Though the final figure has not yet been compiled, we are estimating the total cost of the building, site work, permits, and fees to be just under \$500,000. Funds well spent to give us a base to expand the ministry for which we have been called - spreading the "Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ".

## **OUR STRUCTURE**

### **Membership**

At the end of 2019, our membership stands at 111. Our Membership is composed of women and men, with a wide range of ages. Our average attendance is 25-30

### **Paid Leadership**

Paid members of the church leadership are the pastor, the music director, and the church Secretary; all of whom are part time. The pastor guides the church in spiritual matters and encourages church members to participate in committees and activities. He/she acts as moderator of session, conducts bible studies and offers spiritual help to those experiencing losses and challenges in their lives in addition to encouraging spiritual growth of church members. The music director provides and oversees music for services throughout the church year and is in charge of the choir which performs during Advent, Christmas, and Easter. The church secretary prepares and produces copies of the weekly church bulletin and the monthly newsletter. She performs all clerical work needed by the church leadership.

### **Unpaid Leadership, Programs, Committees:**

**Session** is the governing body of the church and is composed of 9 elders. They oversee the daily activities of the church and frequently serve as chairpersons of church committees. Any member of the

congregation can serve on committees and chair or co-chair Committees. There is a Clerk of Session and a Treasurer appointed and approved by session annually.

**The Administration Committee** assisted by the work of the treasurer, manages the financial affairs of the church. They oversee the budget, coordinate the yearly audit, and prepare the financial report presented to the members in January. They conduct reviews of paid employees and schedule and train weekly counters.

**The Building and Grounds Committee** is responsible for identifying necessary repairs, general maintenance and obtaining bids when needed for larger projects. They organize seasonal workdays and oversee cleaning and lawn maintenance contracts. They are also in charge of approving and scheduling use of the church and fellowship hall.

**The Christian Education Committee** is in charge of the Sunday School Program currently held at 9:30 each Sunday September-June. Our Sunday school currently serves approximately 15 children in preschool through 6th grade, with our summer VBS averaging an attendance of 20-25. They also oversee Confirmation Classes and Adult Bible Study.

**The Membership Committee** educates and accepts new members into the church. They keep a roll of members and publish a members and friends directory.

**The Mission Committee** continues to serve the homeless through various donations and Interfaith Hospitality Network. Hope supports Veterans through the food pantry in Lakewood including special meals for Thanksgiving and Christmas. They help Lakewood public school children through backpack and school supplies collections every September and a giving tree every Christmas. The committee promotes and oversees the special offerings including the Christmas Joy offering to presbytery. They frequently partner with the Christian Ed committee and recently our “small but mighty” congregation raised over \$1300 to provide a complete family farm for an impoverished community. Our church members are always generous when special needs arise.

**The Stewardship Committee** is in charge of the annual pledge drive but is also active year-round coordinating with other committees to inspire the congregation to remain active in the church through the giving of time, talent, and treasure. Last year’s theme: Stewardship is what we do when we believe. Giving is a reflection of God’s generosity. I love the face of Christ I see in you. Pledges were \$58,325, consistent with the past.

**The Worship Committee** members and the pastor coordinate the worship activities of the Church. They schedule and recruit weekly readers, ushers and greeters and coordinate with the secretary on bulletins. They prepare Communion and schedule servers to assist the pastor in performing communion. They decorate and order all necessary supplies for worship throughout the year. They are coordinating with the Transition team to provide pulpit coverage during this time.

**The Fellowship Committee** is in charge of social events of the church including coffee hour after worship, luncheons, special dinners and the annual picnic in conjunction with CE children’s Sunday every June, They typically coordinate a Corned Beef dinner in March, Easter Sunday breakfast cooked by the men of our congregation, Christmas potluck after the pageant as well as many themed events annually. We have a long-standing tradition of Harvest Home dinner in the fall for which we have a sub-committee. Many new and traditional events have had to be postponed due to the Covid 19 virus.

## **CHURCH PROPERTIES**

Hope Presbyterian church is located in Lakewood but closely borders the towns of Jackson and Howell. The church proper consists of a large sanctuary with a choir room located behind the altar. On the same floor is the secretary/main office, a narthex, the Pastor's office, a copy room, lavatory and one additional office currently used by counters after service. The lower level is made up of a large fellowship room, three Sunday school rooms, a nursery, a library, walk-in storage closet, two lavatories and the boiler room. Adjacent to the church is the manse which is currently being used by Bread from Heaven to store food kitchen inventory. This three-story building has been used in various capacities including housing groups for disaster relief after Superstorm Sandy. Our buildings are old, they are in generally good repair. Several significant capital improvement projects have recently been completed. A new roof and solar panels were installed on the church. Solar credits will be accumulating, which can be sold. A Lift was installed to facilitate handicap access to the church, Fellowship Hall floor was redone. Parking lot was relined. Our congregation is characterized by generosity and a strong bond of church family working together. We remain strong in this time of global pandemic holding services and meetings via zoom until we can be together again.

## **WHO WE ARE, 2020**

We are a small but mighty church offering a lot of love and support to one another and to the community. Our membership is currently 111. Our membership consists of several long-time families, and some new ones as well. The age span of members is 15 through 90 years old. In addition, there are approximately 13 Sunday School aged children. Average worship attendance before the corona virus was about 25-30 weekly. We are currently (May, 2020) worshipping via Zoom, with approximately 22 households participating weekly. We are physically located in the midst of a growing population of a Jewish community. As the community has changed, our outreach has changed. In recent years we have been able to offer the use of our facilities to other groups as a form of ministry. Monmouth Presbytery has used our facility as an office, Easter Seals uses our facility as a meeting place, AA and NA have met in our Fellowship Hall for many years, and recently we have opened our sanctuary to two Hispanic congregations. We have just begun supporting a food pantry outreach group by allowing them to use our vacant manse as their storage.

The members of our congregation enjoy each other's company through coffee hour weekly, bible studies, and dinners. Committees meet at various times, and the size of committees also varies. We have several members who are pillars in the church, always ready and willing to do what needs to be done. We encourage everyone to support the activities of the church, but we also understand we each have obligations in life.

Our current session consists of 9 elders and the clerk of session.

## **OUR COMMUNITY**

Hope Presbyterian Church is located in the northwest corner of the Township of Lakewood in Ocean County. This also places the church in the northern section of Ocean County near the border with Monmouth County. Hope Presbyterian Church serves and is served by the following communities: Howell Township to the north and east; Jackson Township to the west; Toms River to the south; and Brick Township to the east. All of these communities have creatively welcomed in past and recent



decades the senior population by building gated and diverse living spaces as well as care facilities. The next great challenge on the doorstep is to learn to live respectfully and in harmony with the current influx of Orthodox Jewish families and their institutions.

#### **OUR NEIGHBORS:**

**Lakewood Township** - Notable: Home of the Lakewood Blue Claws Minor League Baseball team (affiliate of the Philadelphia Phillies Major League Baseball Team) Home of Beth Midrash Gohova the largest Yeshiva (Rabbinical School) outside of Israel.

Population=100,763 - Race: White=83.7% Hispanic=13.4% Black/African American=1.9%, Asian=0.6%, Other/Two or More= 0.3% Median Age= 19.9 - Median home value= (2014-2018)=\$322,000 Education: Public School enrollment= 6240 students; 3 Elementary Schools, 1 Middle School, 1 High School. Student teacher ratio 8.7-12.9 students/teacher. Churches: New Life Christian Center; Christian Missionary Church; Calvary Lighthouse; First Presbyterian Church (33 members; 21 persons in attendance at worship) Hope Presbyterian Church has 5 members and 4 friends who live in Lakewood.

**Jackson Township** - Notable: Home of Great Adventure Theme Park, Hurricane Harbor and Drive Thru Safari. Town named after President Andrew Jackson one year before his death.

Population=57,218 - Race: White=80.3%, Hispanic=9.3%, Black/African American=5.7%, Asian=3.4%, Other/Two or More= 1.2% - Median Age= 40.2 - Median Home Value= \$350,00 - Median Income= \$90,805 Education: Student Enrollment=9000 students: 6 Elementary Schools, 2 Middle Schools, 2 High Schools. Student Teacher Ratio= 12 students to one teacher. Churches: St. Aloysius Gonzaga Parish, Faith Bible Church of Jackson, DeBow's United Methodist Church, Abundant Life Ministry, Cornerstone Presbyterian Church (101 members; 55 persons in attendance at worship) Hope Presbyterian Church has 39 members and 7 friends who live in Jackson.

**Howell Township** - Notable: Manasquan Reservoir and numerous recreational areas. St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral Russian Orthodox Church

Population=51,958 - Race: White=78.8%, Hispanic=10.8%, Asian=5.1%, Black/African American=3.5%, Other/Two or More= 1.7% - Median Age= 40.2 - Median Home Value=\$331,500 - Median Income= \$68,972 Education: Student enrollment=13,664 students; 8 Elementary Schools, 2 Middle Schools, 2 High Schools. Student to teacher ratio is 15.4 or less students for one teacher. Churches: Squankum United Methodist Church, Cornerstone Calvary Chapel, Open Door Bible Baptist, Church of the Nativity, Pierce Memorial Presbyterian Church (57 members, 38 persons attend worship) Hope Presbyterian Church has 11 members and 8 friends who live in Howell.

**Brick Township** - Notable: Beaches on the Metedeconk River, Lagoons, Barnegat Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Youth Sports

Population=75,702 - Race: White=84.9%, Hispanic=10.1%, Asian=1.9%, Black/African American=1.7%, Other/Two or More= 1.4% - Median Age= 44.8 - Median Home Value=\$284,900 - Median Income= \$61,541 Education: Student enrollment=8809 students; 7 Elementary Schools, 2 Middle Schools, 2 High Schools. Churches: St. Simon by the Sea, Trinity Bible Church, Growing Faith Church, New Beginnings Christian Fellowship, Brick Presbyterian Church (281 members; 128 persons in attendance at worship) Hope Presbyterian Church has one member who lives in Brick.

**Toms River Township** - Notable: Largest Halloween Parade for many decades. Home to MTV's Jersey Shore and Boardwalk Empire filming.

Population=88,984 - Race: White 81.5%, Hispanic 9.7%, Asian 4.2%, Black/African American 2.7%, Other/Two or More= 1.9% - Median Age= 43.2 - Median home value= \$286,600 Education: Student enrollment=15,878: 9 Elementary Schools, 3 Intermediate schools, 3 High Schools. Student Teacher Ratio=13 students to one teacher. Churches: Ocean County Baptist Church, Pinelands Reformed Church, Ocean Christian Community Church, The Church of Grace and Peace, The Presbyterian Church of Toms River (1150 members; 545 in attendance at worship) Hope Presbyterian Church has 7 members and 9 friends who live in Toms River. This report was generated by the Transition Committee formed in May of 2020. The members met weekly via Zoom online meetings due to the Coronavirus and mandated social distancing requirements associated with combating the spread of the virus.

### **Committee Members**

#### **Members on Session:**

Chella Rajakumar  
Chris Earle  
Maria Earle  
Janine Gorsak  
Steve Blaho

#### **Members at Large:**

Cathie Strauss  
Kirsten Gorsak  
Patty Williams  
Tony Trivisano

Edward Carlson, COM  
Pam Flockhart, Clerk of Session