

HERE'S HOPE

MARCH EDITION 2018

Maundy Thursday Service
March 29th at 7:00pm
Easter Morning Service
April 1st at 11:00am

ALL HANDS NEEDED

Church Clean up day is set for
**Saturday, March 24th from 9:00am
to 12:00pm.** Bring your gloves, rakes,
shovels, trimming tools, wheel
barrow, etc. Looking forward to
seeing everyone there!

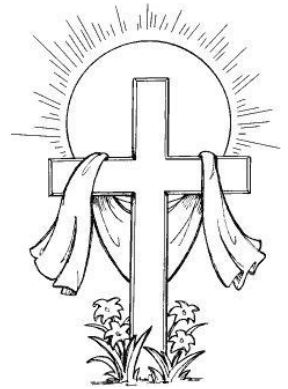


The Mission House is in need of a dryer. If anyone has a used dryer they are no longer needing please give Tony Travisano a call. 732-966-1898

Easter Morning Breakfast!

From 9am to 11am

There will be eggs, bacon, pork roll, milk and cereal. Coffee, tea and juice will also be served. The cost is free. If you would like to make a donation that would be greatly appreciated. Everyone is welcome to attend and /or help out with the cooking and hall duties. Please plan to join us for a wonderful meal and a morning of fellowship. See Chris Earle with any questions.



PER CAPITA FOR 2018

Many of you have heard the phrase “connectional church” specifically referenced as a description of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). So in essence this means that we as Presbyterians work together. Our congregation like so many receive support, resources and guidance from our denomination, i.e. Presbyterian Church USA. The **PER CAPITA** assessment supports the overall mission of the denomination with a portion of the **PER CAPITA** being retained by Monmouth Presbytery for staff salaries and programs, a portion being given to the Synod of the Northeast, and also to Presbyterian Church USA in Louisville. Hope Church is committed to paying **PER CAPITA** for ALL active members whether or not you are currently pledging. So we are hopeful that members will in 2018 pay the **PER CAPITA** amount of **\$37**. For pledging members there are blue envelopes in the offering boxes which may be used or simply write **PER CAPITA** on the memo line of your check.

Sincere thanks for continuing to be the cheerful givers that we know you are and that God continues to support and bless.

In Christ's faithful service,

Patty Williams, Chair Stewardship Team

Pastor Paul's Page

Get Real.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus lays out three primary practices that define fruitful spirituality: almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. There is no point to doing Lent unless it is to strengthen these central areas of our spiritual life.

Regarding all three Jesus criticizes “hypocrites,” that is, people who superficially go through the motions of pious acts, but whose main concern is the benefit they believe they will receive from being seen doing them. In other words, they are doing these things, not out of a sincere trust in God, but for show. They think other people will see them and admire them.

Jesus insists that we keep to ourselves with our spiritual life, not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing. By rejecting any notion of receiving recognition or reward for our behavior in this existence, Jesus says our reward is a treasure “in heaven.”

It makes me think of how much we do “for show,” from choosing what to wear in the morning to deciding what purchases to make. Indeed, in America a lot of what we do is an expression of our inner fantasies about ourselves. We don't just do things for other people to see, but “for show” to ourselves, to convince ourselves we are really living this or that dream. Like when we buy a car that is designed to travel over the open landscape, thus feeding our fantasy that we are adventurous wilderness explorers, when in reality the car will never leave pavement.

Jesus wants us to get real. The false, superficial, public narratives we tell ourselves need to be relinquished. We need to get to the bottom of who we are. That's what's going on when we reflect on the ashes of Ash Wednesday. Ashes are basically carbon, the primal element of all life. The phrase that is spoken when ashes are imposed is: “You are dust and to dust you shall return.” This may serve to oppress us with guilt, remorse, or feelings of worthlessness. But this is not an exercise in self-abuse or self-hatred. Rather it is about honesty. We are reminded of what we are at our most basic and physical.

Our false, old, ego-driven, small self doesn't want to remember this. It projects delusions of grandeur about ourselves. Just like we don't want to be reminded of our own death, or even our aging.

But dust and ash are more than reminders of our mortality. They also represent our connection and integration into all of life and all that is. I believe it was a Joni Mitchell song from the 1960's that included the line, “We are stardust.” The elements of which we are made are created and used by God in the beginning to form life. They were taken on by God in becoming flesh in Jesus. Dust is what God speaks to in creating each one of us. It is not bad, it is not neutral; it is explicitly and exceedingly blessed!

Lent is about getting back to basics and fundamentals. It is about clearing out the clutter and silencing the noise of our existence. This means abandoning what we do because of what we calculate we will get out of it, and instead emptying ourselves so that God may use us as raw material of a new creation.

Lent is therefore a joyful time! To be connected back to our original nature is to realize that we are made in God's Image. It is a time to discover who and whose we really are, and to embrace that as the priceless gift that it is. For while the dust is what we are reduced to after our bodies give out, dust is also what God breathes life into in creating us.

In actual practice this means taking on tasks that return no profit, gain no reward, and accrue no earthly credit. Indeed, it means taking on tasks of selfless service that society frowns on or even punishes. For in these we quietly affirm a common humanity with each other and with Jesus.

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Paul

Pastor Paul's Page Continued

Pastor's Report
January 21, 2018

I have only been with you for about 8 months. In that time I have learned enough to see that this congregation has many gifts and blessings. At the same time, I sense that like most mainline churches you are deep into the stages of grief. I sense denial, bargaining, anger, and depression, mainly because your context has changed so radically and visibly over the last few decades. For most churches the denial is easier to sustain because they can convince themselves that their changing context can still be won over, that eventually they will come around and return to church. That is not possible for you. You cannot delude yourself that people will come back, because you're not surrounded by those who left the church or never knew faith, but by neighbors who have a strong faith — it's just not ours. You're actually ahead of other churches in this regard. Because regular secularized Americans are only marginally more likely to show up in Christian churches than are Orthodox Jews. Most churches are able to fool themselves that this isn't so; you aren't. That in itself is a blessing.

Like most churches, you have understandably become therefore fairly allergic to change. Most people hear "change" and immediately assume they have to start adapting the church to the culture. I call this the market-driven approach. It's fairly problematic for Lakewood for obvious reasons. But even if you expand beyond this locale and develop ministries designed to appeal to contemporary or younger people, that is a very difficult and expensive plan for a church like this one to pull off, for several reasons, even if you wanted to. And I don't believe you do.

And that's fine. I do not believe the market-driven approach works anyway. For a church is successful, not when it is increasing in numbers, whether we are measuring members or dollars. A church is successful when it is faithful to Jesus Christ and actively carrying out God's mission in the world.

The key characteristic of successful churches is authenticity. Pretending to be something we're not is even more pointless than trying to be who we used to be. Instead, churches have to listen and respond to the Word of God, Jesus Christ, here and now. We have to do what we do with commitment and quality. Most of all, we have to be spiritually self-aware, able to say clearly why we do what we do in terms of the gospel of Jesus.

We will shortly be doing a Natural Church Development diagnostic in which a representative 29 of you will be taking a survey. We will be using the results to shape our ministry going forward, working to build up areas in need of improvement.

In one sense, there are only a handful of churches in North America with a context like this one. In another sense, almost every church is facing similar challenges: a world that is indifferent to hostile to our message. I am fascinated to see what God is going to do here!

Recap of Congregational Meeting

The annual meeting of the Congregation of Hope Presbyterian Church was held on January 21, 2018. Committee reports for 2017 were provided. Mission: Elder Patty Williams reviewed 2017 activity: Interfaith Hospitality Network, Veterans Center, Stamps for Wounded Veterans, Lakewood Schools, College Students, Mother's Day plant sale, OGHS, Joy Offering, Hurricane and Disaster Relief. The Mission House for Super Storm Sandy was closed. The committee is looking forward to planning a mission trip in the next year, utilizing the Mission House, working with 21 Plus, and other activities. Stewardship: Elder Patty Williams reviewed 2017 activity. The theme was what we do after what we say. The luncheon held in October was rich in conversation regarding 2018. Pledges were dedicated in November. Trained money counters are scheduled weekly. There are currently 25 pledges for 2018 which total \$66,721. Worship: Elder Sally Krutulius reviewed 2017 activity: All aspects of the weekly worship have been coordinated throughout the year, including greeters, lay readers, pastors, seasonal decorating, children's chat, communion, choir, music. The piano was tuned. The organ will be tuned this year. Administration: Elder Tammi Beyer reviewed the 2017 activity. Hillary Bryce was chair. Hope Church is alive and well spiritually and financially. The per capita has been paid up to date. The mortgage was paid off in 2016. We are now in a position to transfer funds back to their proper accounts, as funds were borrowed as necessary during a few years of financial difficulty. The committee is working on on-line giving procedures, and the budget for 2018. Christian Education: Elder Janine Gorsak reviewed 2017 activity. There is a small core group of children but lots of help. The committee continues to support Sunday School, Youth Group, Vacation Bible School, Easter Egg Hunt, Christmas pageant, and very active adult bible study classes. Pastor Paul is now leading the bible studies. A special thank you to Patti Williams and Cathie Strauss for leading the classes while the church was without a pastor. Membership/Fellowship: Elder Cathie Strauss reviewed 2017 activity. They held luncheons during the year, they assisted Stewardship with their luncheon and Admin with the mortgage burning luncheon. They reviewed membership lists. Salt shakers, blanket makers groups meet. Harvest home was held. New members classes were held in the spring. Sunshine cards are sent out. Coffee hour continues. 2018 goals are to continue with luncheons, Easter breakfast, spaghetti or ham dinner, picnic in June, and possibly a party celebrating 20 years in our "new" sanctuary. Buildings and Grounds: Elder Bill Hook reviewed 2017. The committee held 2 clean-up dates, spring and fall. They replaced the toilet in the hall with a handicapped toilet, the light in the parking lot was repaired. Screens in the hall were repaired. Goals for 2018 are to replace steel doors downstairs, and paint the manse. Thank you Johnson family for snow removal service. Pastor's Report: Pastor Paul reported he has been here since June. He provided a very nice assessment of his perception of where we are and who we are and hope for the future. The budget for 2018 was reviewed. Income is projected to be \$95,122.16, expenses are projected to be \$89,007.63. If you have any questions, please see any elder. We are all happy to help. Submitted by Clerk Pam Flockhart

NEW CONFIRMATION CLASSES.

This spring I will be convening a Confirmation Class for young people who wish to know more about the Christian faith. The classes are scheduled to be held on Sunday afternoons, from February 25 through May 13, following morning worship, and will last about an hour. Anyone may attend, though the usual minimum age is 13. At the end of the class participants will be given the opportunity to publicly confirm for themselves the vows made at their baptism. This will be on Pentecost, May 20. The theme will concern what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Anyone interested should contact me, or just come to the first meeting which will be at 12:30 pm on February 25.

—Paul+

MISSION work to be done throughout the year!



Interfaith
Hospitality
Network

A Community Response for Homeless Families

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK

Our night to host is **Saturday, March 3rd**. We are seeking volunteers for meal prep. and visiting with the guest from 6-8pm and overnight hosting from 8pm to 7am when guests must vacate their quarters. Please see Peggy, Patty or Toni if you are interested in helping



MISSION WORK IN THE FOOD STORE

The staff at the Lakewood Vet Center are deeply grateful for our year round giving to their pantry shelves and gift cards for the Veterans and clients who frequent their counseling and support groups. In addition to canned pasta, meats and tuna, crackers would be great (to compliment the generous donations of peanut butter and jelly) Canned soups, juice packs and snack packs are also wonderful additions.

Veterans don't want a handout they want a hand up!



MISSION WORK IN THE CLOSET

Cleaning out the closets? Don't forget that we now have a Used Clothing Drop Off Shed in the parking lot. You can donate clothing, shoes, belts, purses, blankets, sheets, pillowcases, drapes and stuffed toys. **NONE** of your donations will be cut up or shredded. All of the donations will be handed out to people in need. The church will also be paid by the pound for all items donated. Please do not place rags, fabric scraps, toys or household goods in the box.



MISSION WORK IN OUR MAILBOXES

It's so easy to help! Please remember to save the cancelled stamps from cards and letters that you receive in the mail. Place the stamps in the "mail box" in the narthex and we will do the rest. We will be sending a package of cancelled stamps to our Wounded Veterans several times a year. This is an on going project.



MARK YOUR CALENDERS! 21 PLUS

On **June 2, 2018** the Mission Team is looking for helpers to come to 21 PLUS to help clean up the area, do some planting and paint the ramp.

All volunteers are welcome

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

One Great Hour of Sharing will be collected at worship on Sunday, March 25, 2018.

Note of Appreciation

Dear Hope Presbyterian church Members,

We gratefully acknowledge your kind support of our program. Your contribution of several thousand US stamps will help cheer-up a hospitalized or out-patient Veteran. We thank you on behalf of those who will benefit from your generosity and for your continuing support of our Veterans.

Sincerely,

John M. Hotchner, Vice-President Stamps for the Wounded (est. 1942)

Hope Presbyterian Church

617 Hope Chapel Road, Lakewood, New Jersey 08701 (732) 364-8318 • Fax: (732) 364-1532



[The PC\(USA\) seal - A closer look.](#)

Welcome to Hope Church

Online Giving



[Visit Us on Facebook](#)

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...

- Share with the community our love of God and the grace He has bestowed upon us in Jesus Christ through continued local mission efforts, developments of programs for the retiree, and ecumenical activities.
- Share within 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 alternative worship services, expanding the music program, and by offering retreats.
- Increase our opportunities to reach the many young people in our congregation and community by enriching and expanding Christian Education programs for children, youth, and young adults.

Pastor: Rev. Paul Rack
paulrack@optonline.net

We Have A New Web-Site

LakewoodHope.org

The web site has been updated and a new feature has been added. Please notice the green Give Now button. If you forget to bring or send in your contribution you are now able to donate on line. It is a very safe and simple process.

If you come to church yet donated on line there is a card in every pew that you can fill out and drop into the offering tray during the service. This is NOT necessary but it is an option.

The church is notified of all internet donations.

Any questions speak with Tammi Beyer or Chris Earle

Stewardship

Stewardship Talking Points will continue during worship throughout the month of March. As we explore the discipline of Christian stewardship some themes we will be addressing may include: simplicity, generosity, honesty, hospitality, compassion, receptivity and more. We invite and encourage everyone's participation during this Lenten Season.

Decorating Time!

Please come out and help the Worship Committee decorate the church in time for Easter Morning.

It will be on **March 31, 2018** starting at 10:00am.



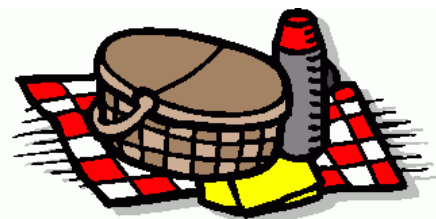
Many Hands Make Light Work!



June 10, 2018

following Sunday Service.

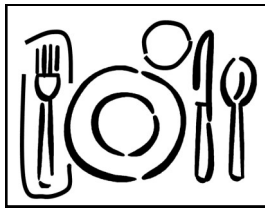
At Pine Park in Lakewood.
Look for more information to come.



Church Picnic



Corned Beef Dinner



Date: Saturday, March 24, 2018

Time: 5:30pm



For Reservations call 732-364-8318

Come join us for a delicious St. Patrick's Day dinner with all the fixings. \$12.00 per person. For children age 12 and under we are asking for a donation.

Main Course : Corned Beef or Roast Pork

Sides: Red Potatoes, Cabbage, Glazed Carrots, Sauerkraut and Apple Sauce

Breads: Irish Soda Bread, Rye bread or rolls

Beverages: Lemonade, Iced Tea, Water or Milk

Desserts: Coffee, Tea, Cakes or Cookies

Hope Presbyterian Church
617 Hope Chapel Road, Lakewood NJ 08701
732-364-8318

Contact Information

FOR:	PHONE	CONTACT
Hope Church	364-8318	Susan in the Office
Pastor at home	908-625-1844	Pastor Paul Rack
Pastor's e-mail		PaulRack@optonline.net
Clerk of Session	928-3773	Pam Flockhart
President of corporate matters	814-1837	Hillary Bryce
Treasurer	942-0780	Tammi Beyer
Music Director	275-1937	Irina Bessedá
Sexton		
Senior / Junior Youth Group	(908)229-5989	Peggy Wuestneck
Here's Hope	364-8318	Susan in the Office
Veterans Food Donations	367-6627	Ken Williams
Flowers	364-2182	Carol Urm
Quilting Group	928-0121	Laura Johnson
Redevelopment		



Be sure to check us out on Facebook at Hope Presbyterian Church

If you would prefer to receive Here's Hope by e-mail just let Susan in the office know by sending her an e-mail at:
617HopeChurchOffice@gmail.com

Church Office Hours

Monday Tuesday Wednesday:
 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Closed Thursday and Friday

The office phone number is
 732-364-8318

March Birthdays!

- Anna Williams
- Amanda Strauss
- Alexandra Gill
- Juliet Bryce
- Teddi Hayes
- Bianca Kosarin
- Breanna Kosarin
- Bonnie Hehner
- Kevin Huy
- Abigail Wuestneck
- Eric Beyer
- Timothy Wuestneck
- John Wuestneck
- Kylie Miller

If anyone's birthday was omitted at any point throughout the year please let the office know and it will be added to the list

Session Members 2018

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| Tony Travisano | 732-966-1898 | Chris Earle | 732-279-4224 |
| Mission Committee | | Administration | |
| Sharon Green | 732-276-6527 | Sally Krutulís | 732-703-3013 |
| Christian Education | | Worship | |
| Tammi Beyer | 732-942-0780 | Patty Williams | 732-367-6627 |
| Treasurer | | Stewardship | |
| Bill Hook | 732-431-3217 | Chella Rajakumar | 732-534-5996 |
| Buildings and Grounds | | Worship | |
| Cathie Strauss | 732-363-5985 | | |
| Membership/Fellowship | | | |
| Clerk of Session | Pam Flockhart | | |