

Hope-Line

The Newsletter for Hope Presbyterian Church of Winter Haven, Florida 33884-1556
2110 Cypress Gardens Boulevard ♦ 863-324-6382 ♦ hope@hopepreswh.org ♦ www.hopepreswh.org

DECEMBER 2015



What does it take for us to be thankful?

Realizing what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

I love this time of year: Thanksgiving/Advent/Christmas. More than any other time of year, we are reminded of what our God has done for us. Out of love for you and me, God sent his son, Emmanuelle, “God with us,” Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Simply imagine the love that God has for us and that alone is reason to be thankful.

A friend once said that we are “called” to be thankful. To be called is to answer an invitation. I believe being thankful is a response we give to one who has blessed or gifted us in some way. Thankfulness flows out of the realization that we are special in God’s eyes and valuable in God’s Kingdom. We are thankful because we realize the powerful love our God has for us.

I sometimes ask, “God, how can you continue to bless me with so many blessings?” And then I consider God’s love as it is expressed in the “Christ Event,” Christmas—and I have my answer. Our God is a God of love who spares nothing to save his people. Our God is a God of mystery we do not understand, who accepts us as we are, loves us beyond measure and claims us, faults, sins and all as his own simply for God’s own pleasure.

And so, for me in my faith journey, this season is one celebration centered on the power and love of our God for each of us. May each of you have a happy Thanksgiving, blessed Advent and Merry Christmas.

Peace. *Pastor Owen*



From Josiah the Church Gecko

Sometimes Pastor Owen lets me visit the Gardens of Hope on Saturdays. Boy, do I love those gardens! I can play LEAPING LIZARDS with my friends, and when we’re hungry, we can feast on lots and lots of insects that live in the gardens. In fact, we lizards help keep down populations of insects that are harmful to our garden plants!

The reason we have so many insects in the Gardens of Hope is that our Gardens follow the principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™! That means no harsh chemicals on our plants! We have lots of God’s creatures in our Gardens: birds and butterflies and insects and lizard friends!

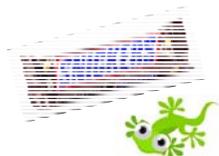
Well.....most Saturdays are pretty quiet in the Gardens. Sometimes people come and stroll through the gardens. I see them sitting on benches, sometimes reading the Garden Meditations that are found in the Gardens’ pamphlet box. Sometimes I see people sitting on a bench with their heads bowed. I make sure I don’t jump on them, and I let them pray in peace.

Last Saturday morning was different! Oh boy. Some people came to the Gardens, and they were **NOT** quiet! I counted 8 people, and they didn’t sit on a bench one time. No sir, these people were Garden Volunteers and they blasted through the gardens, weeding, and pruning and grooming the plants. They put out 50 bales of pine straw to mulch the flowers. They renewed the wildflower area. They worked and must have had a pretty good time, because there was a lot of laughter in the Gardens that day.

After they blasted out of the gardens (I think they were hungry!), the Gardens were peaceful once again. Since it was lunch time, I scurried around and found some aphids, yum yum! I happened to catch some of the names of the workers that day: Mary Ellen, Normand, Ron, Marsha, Jim, John, Jan, Jeanie and Molly. I know there are other garden volunteers that I haven’t met yet. They are all working together to make our Gardens of Hope beautiful.

Now the moral of the story is this: even though I enjoyed my time in the Gardens, I sure do look forward to hanging out with Owen and helping him as he cares for Hope Church. (AND I HOPE HE DOESN’T THINK I LIKE INSECTS BETTER THAN SNICKERS BARS!!)

Peace, Josiah



THE EYEWITNESS NEWS TEAM has had a time keeping up with all the activity occurring with the Youth of Hope. The Eyewitness News team was called by all our neighbors and friends due to a huge commotion. Instead of being a beacon of light on the hill here at Hope, it was described more as an explosion of light. We had a tremendous turnout of the community and are ever so thankful to all who participated, contributed, and helped in ALL ways with **TRUNK OR TREAT**. A special thanks to all the youth that nailed, sawed, and painted the Haunted House Trunk. We also cannot forget Boy Scout Troop 565 that cooked hotdogs, the Presbyterian Women and their delicious cupcakes, Publix Grocery store for their contribution of groceries, Hope Creative School for sponsoring the S'mores pit and caramel apple bar, and Jump-a-lot Moonwalks. A special thanks to Dakota and the Butler family for providing the hayride. There were so many of you that stepped up and shared your many gifts and talents through crafts, face painting, S'mores, caramel apples, photography, activities and games, the 20 SPECTACULAR trunks, but most of all...that wonderful outreaching hospitality and love that Hope is so known for EVANGELIZING!



There are rumors that there are stars shining in our Youth these days. Their movie previews have not come out yet...but all we can say is, "Stay Tuned." Their debut will be during the Christmas Season so don't miss out!

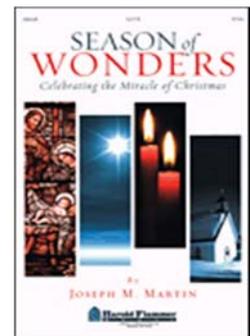
The Eyewitness News Team went to check out Kid's Rock and caught them out fishing during one of their classes. Kid's Rock has really been rocking it out with Peter. (Did you get that? Peter the Rock of the Church?) We have been learning all about Peter's ministry and how we are NOT so different from Peter. We have been fishing, eaten some fish, and have enjoyed learning some new songs. We must share that we have some special disciples that help us every week. A special thanks to Lynn Maxwell, Dee O'Hern, and Jeanie Madaus. They have not only given their time, talents, and gifts...but also provided snacks for our time together. They have been great examples of discipleship. Kid's Rock will be taking a little break for the holidays, but our work will continue behind the scenes...literally!

—Julie Carriker, Interim Director of Christian Education



Rudolph needs your help during this Christmas Season! The CE Committee is sponsoring the **Rudolph Round Up Toy Drive** for children in the foster care system. As you enter the sanctuary, you will see the huge box for you to place your toys and gifts. There is a green brochure provided in the Narthex that suggests ideas for our toy drive if needed. Please help us as we celebrate this season by giving to children right here in our community. Toys and gifts are due before **Sunday, December 6**. Your support is genuinely appreciated.

Chancel Choir Cantata — "Season of Wonders"
Celebrating the Miracles of Christmas
David Thomas, Director of Music
Sunday—December 13 — Third Sunday of Advent
8:15 and 10:30 Worship



Hope Creative School Christmas Program
"One Silent Night"
Thursday, December 17 — 11 a.m. — McGrath Hall
 Hope Church family and friends are welcome!

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

All women are invited to join any or all Circles.

MORNING GLORIES CIRCLE—Tuesday, December 1—11:45 a.m.

Christmas Luncheon at Olive Garden Restaurant. Bring an unwrapped gift for Angel Care children.
Newcomers welcome! Questions? Please call Nancy Reddout (863) 318-9868.

CIRCLE OF HOPE — Wednesday, December 2 — 1:30 p.m.

at the home of Betty Akers, 4043 Birkdale Drive, Lake Wales.

Mission is support of a BethEl Mission family for the holidays.

Questions? Please call Betty (863) 325-0052.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS are hosting the Coffee Fellowships for the month of December.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN ANNUAL LADIES' CHRISTMAS TEA

"A CUP OF CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS"



Saturday, December 5 — 12 Noon - 2 p.m. — McGrath Hall

Music: Sally Anderson and the Hammered Dulcimers

Cost: \$10 per person; under 5—Free

Tickets are on sale Sunday morning after Worship.

Questions? Please contact PeggyAnn White: paw@krats.com

THE NEXT MEN OF HOPE luncheon will be a combined November/December luncheon on
Wednesday, December 9—12 Noon at Perkins Restaurant. Hope to see you there!

CHRISTMAS FELLOWSHIP DINNER Wednesday, December 9— 6 p.m.—McGrath Hall

Menu: Spinach Salad with hot bacon dressing,
Brandy/Apricot Glazed Pork Loin, Twice-baked potatoes,
Roasted vegetables, dinner rolls, coffee, iced tea. **Dessert:** Red Velvet Cake

Program: Join us for our *"Annual Christmas Carol Sing-A-Long!"*

Cost: \$8 (Adults); Kids 12 and under—Free!

But everyone needs a ticket!

Dinner tickets must be purchased in advance to facilitate food purchases.

Tickets available **Sundays, November 29 and December 6.**



2014 ANNUAL REPORTS



All SESSION COMMITTEE MODERATORS AND BOARD OF DEACONS, church/group
organization leaders, please turn in your annual reports to the Church Office by **December 31!**

All reports will be included in a printed report for presentation at the Annual Congregational
Meeting after the first of the year. **Thank you for your help in meeting the deadline.**

END-OF-YEAR GIVING

Year-end 2015 is just about upon us.

**To be eligible for an IRS tax deduction, any gifts you may wish to make after Sunday's offering
on December 27, must be received in the Church Office on or before December 31, 2015.**

Special Note: If a gift is mailed, it must have a postmark of December 31, 2015.

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**Church Office Holiday Schedule—Church Office Closed
Christmas Eve, December 24, Christmas Day, December 25
New Year's Day, January 1, 2016**



FALL STEWARDSHIP DRIVE

**Please use the “estimate of giving” pledge form found on the Narthex table
or the one mailed to you so the Church
can plan its spending program for 2016. Thank you!**

**To All Members and Friends of Hope Presbyterian Church,
Your faithful and generous support of the programs and Mission of Hope Presbyterian Church is
very much appreciated. We wish everyone a Blessed Christmas season and ask God to Bless us,
as together we enter a New Year.**

The Session of Hope Presbyterian Church