

Hope-Line

The Newsletter for Hope Presbyterian Church of Winter Haven, Florida 33884-1556
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February 2016



At some places and times in my life, I have been more aware of God's presence and love than at other places and times, but always in the season of Lent, I feel the closeness of God's presence. Maybe this is due to my keener awareness of God's work of salvation as we journey toward Easter. Maybe it is the power of worship and our spiritual journey this time of year. And I guess if the truth be told, that is what this season is all about anyway: making us sense the closeness of God's presence. That presence reassures me and helps me keep my sense of direction in these days.

Shortly after moving here I went to sleep one night and fell into a deep sleep. I was really tired, so tired I don't even remember going to bed. Sometime in the middle of the night, I heard a strange sound that woke me up. I remember sitting straight up in the bed looking around the room, which because we had not lived here long, was not "our bedroom" yet. For a moment I did not remember where I was—a little frightened until I looked over and saw Julie in the bed beside of me and I suddenly realized where I was and that everything was fine. I figured out that the sound that woke me up was a train. I just was not used to the sound of trains in the night!

God is that presence in our lives that grounds us and reassures us when we travel through life and face uncertainties. In this journey through Lent to Easter I hope you will draw closer to God and be more aware of God's presence in your life. You will notice the scriptures on Sunday will help us reflect on our relationship with God and develop ways to make it stronger and more meaningful in our lives.

On another note, I want to thank each of you for your support of our Church and its mission. Through your efforts we are casting an even stronger "beacon of Hope" into the community around us. As you answer the call of God in your life and put your faith into action, you demonstrate the presence of God to everyone around you. You never know when you might be that calming presence to someone around you who is in need or facing uncertainty. Thank you for all you do and give to our Church and community!

Peace. *Pastor Owen*

UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FEBRUARY 2016



February 14 — 1st Sunday in Lent

Valentine's Day Fellowship Luncheon — \$8 (Children 12 and under FREE!)
After the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service—McGrath Hall
9 a.m. to 12 Noon —Bloodmobile



Monday, February 15

President's Day Holiday—Church Office and School Closed
Memorial Service for Ted Johnson, Hope Church Sanctuary

Thursday, February 18

Hope Creative School Mom's Day—McGrath Hall—11 a.m.

Saturday, February 20

Annual Gathering of Tampa Bay Presbyterian Women
St Andrews Presbyterian Church in Dunedin — 9 a.m.

February 21 — 2nd Sunday in Lent

Lenten Soup Lunch—McGrath Hall
Donation \$5

February 28 — 3rd Sunday in Lent

Annual Congregational Meeting, Sanctuary—11:35 a.m.
2015 Annual Report Presented
Lenten Soup Lunch—McGrath Hall (after Congregational Meeting) — Donation \$5

From Josiah the Church Gecko



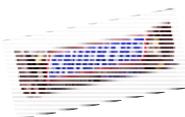
I decided I would share my ten reasons for joining Hope Presbyterian Church with you this month. Maybe I can spark your thoughts as you consider what your ten reasons are.

1. You guys. I find each of you to be so warm and friendly. Being a part of a loving congregation means so much to me. In our day we need a strong “sense of belonging.”
2. Worship is #2 on my list. Our worship services are so varied. I actually attend both. I think all of our services have a very comfortable and somewhat informal feel to them. I feel so connected to God through worship at our Church.
3. One part of worship I also look forward to each week is the sermon. Now don't let Rev. Carrier know this but I always feel like his sermons touch my life in some way. I don't always agree with what he says, and that really is not the point. They always help me strengthen my faith and give me something to think about.
4. Our music program is wonderful. I like the variety of the music offered at our church. I enjoy the choir. I love Mr. Phillip's preludes and offertories. I love joining in with you to sing praise to God on Sunday mornings!
5. I have always been an avid fan of Sunday School. I learn so much and I really do not know what I would do without that time of faith education each week. I like to slip around to each class and get the most out of the classes offered.
6. Bible Study is one of the activities I participate in that simply makes my week. It allows me to connect with a small group of people and learn so much about the Bible. Rev. Carrier always chooses great resources for us to study and they always influence my faith and the way I live my life.
7. For me, one of the ways I express my faith is by my involvement in the mission work of our Church. I feel like each of our mission projects allows us to put our faith into action. I like that!
8. The mark of a strong church is a strong youth ministry. I am so proud of our youth at Hope Presbyterian. They are so committed to the efforts of their group and they have come together well. I am also proud of the support our congregation gives to youth.
9. I also list Presbyterian beliefs as something I like about our church. I know that may be a little odd, but think about it. My favorite is the “priesthood of all believers.” It is great to know that we can approach God for ourselves and others. It is also important to me that we each are called by God to be his “priests” in the world by serving and caring for others. I also think our form of church government is excellent. It is a good way to lead and deal with matters that come up in the life of the church.
10. In reality, I don't know if I really meant for this one to be number ten, because I think it is just as important as any of the others; but I do think one of things I like about Hope is the high level of commitment each of you have for the church and its work. Everyone seems to pitch in and work together and do their very best to serve in the church. It is a wonderful thing to be a part of a committed community of faith.

Well, there are my ten. I hope you will take the time to think about your ten reasons for attending Hope Presbyterian Church too! It would be cool if you would write them down and put them in my mailbox. I would love to hear from you.

Hope you have a great week. See you on Sunday.

Peace.
Josiah



**CHURCH OFFICE AND SCHOOL CLOSED
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2016
PRESIDENT'S DAY HOLIDAY**



YOUTH OF HOPE



The Skywitness News team was back at our church during the Christmas Season. There was a splendor of light that came from our sanctuary on the 20th of December. It took place during broad daylight! The news team arrived just as the Wisemen did to find baby Jesus with pure astonishment. The splendor of light was the Youth of Hope and friends sharing through worship, David Wagner’s “Behind the Pageant.” The scenes “Behind the Pageant” sent waves of laughter and moments of serious pondering to those worshipping with us. The Skywitness

News team shared that we have more than one star at Hope and that we need to do more in our future to make sure our light continues to light the skies with the stories of Jesus. They also reported how they especially enjoyed the music. The guitars and voices were so angelic and were the perfect closing to praise God. They went on and on as to the blessings of how the Youth of Hope touched them! In all seriousness, many of you gave so much of your time, talents and all to help us prepare and share worship with you in December. Thank you to the youth for their very hard work. Thank you to all of you at Hope for your love and support.

As called by Christ, the Youth of Hope will continue in their efforts to share the love of God. We received our T-Shirts and are wearing them throughout the community. We wear them on our trips outside the church and within and find that they are great instruments for evangelism. They are very comfortable too!

As we move into the New Year, we have been blessed with a very new and **EXCITING** ministry with our Youth. We cannot wait to share that with you and those in our midst. We are working diligently and praying that this ministry will bless all those around us. We just ask that you pray for us as we enjoy this time and new venture. The gifts of God abound!

We have many activities planned for this year...kayaking, canoeing, camping, trips to far away places! Your contributions by purchasing the Enjoyment books is so appreciated and helps us towards attending camps. They will continue to be on sale until the end of March and are only \$30. These books help you with savings through coupons for restaurants, golf, recreation, dry cleaning and more. They will continue to be on sale after worship or please see Julie at the church office.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your CHILDREN and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.” Deuteronomy 6:4-7

—Julie Carriker, Interim Director of Christian Education

EASTER LILIES

Easter lilies will again be used to decorate the Sanctuary on **Easter Sunday, March 27**. The cost is \$11 each. If you would like to order a lily either *In Memory Of, In Honor Of, or In Gratitude For*, please return the completed order form with your check (*made payable to Hope Presbyterian Church*) to the Church Office or place it in the offering plate before **Monday, March 14**. A complete listing of donors and the persons in memory of, in honor of, or in gratitude for will be printed in the Easter Sunday bulletin. After worship on Easter Sunday, lilies will be taken to our members and friends of the congregation who are homebound or residing in Health and Rehabilitation facilities.



Name _____ Phone Number _____

Number Ordered _____ Amount Enclosed _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

In Gratitude for _____

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MARCH 2016

**March 6 — 4th Sunday in Lent — Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
Girl Scout Sunday — Lenten Soup Luncheon — Donation \$5!**

March 9 — Wednesday Night Fellowship Dinner — McGrath Hall — 6 p.m.

**March 13 — 5th Sunday in Lent — Daylight Saving Time Begins!
Lenten Soup Luncheon — Donation \$5**

March 20 — Palm Sunday — One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

March 24 — Maundy Thursday Worship — McGrath Hall—7 p.m.

**March 27 — Easter Sunday — HE IS RISEN!
One Great Hour of Sharing Offering**

**7:30 a.m.— Sunrise Service in the Gardens of Hope
8:15 a.m. to 12 Noon — Easter Breakfast— McGrath Hall
8:15 a.m. Worship
9:45 a.m. — Children's Annual Eggstravaganza
10:30 a.m. Worship**

