

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

MARCH 2016



In our mission statement we proclaim that we seek to be “Christ’s Beacon of Hope.”

In thinking about the beauty of that statement, I pondered these thoughts. A beacon guides and illumines an otherwise dark journey—physically and spiritually. Our congregation guides others through its work and worship and all the ways we live as God’s people in the world.

I found myself behind a car the other day that had one of our “Hope Presbyterian Church” magnets on the back. The car was just in front of me coming toward Hope Church on Cypress Gardens Boulevard. We were at the stop-light in front of the Shell station. The traffic always backs up there and often folks in the Shell station have to wait until someone is kind enough to let them out onto the street. Most people seem to inch their way up on the car ahead of them so as to send a direct signal, “There is no way I am letting you out.” But the person in front of me, who had one of our magnets on the back of their car, motioned to the car in the Shell station to go ahead of them and also the person behind them. This wonderful Hope Presbyterian Church exemplary Christian let two cars go ahead of them. As I watched this small gesture of kindness unfold ahead of me I was so impressed. It was a small thing, and the people they let out could not see the magnet representing our church family, but it made me smile and I was so happy—so happy in fact that I sat there a little too long and was prompted to move on by a car horn.

I mention this story because it really is such a small gesture, and even though the people never knew the name of the person who let them out into traffic, I am sure they were grateful for the kindness. And, the one who did the “letting out” must surely know the impact of that kind of kindness. I think this is in some way what it means to be a beacon of hope in the world—by our very nature we are kind and loving to others.

A beacon also draws others to it and illumines the way. A lot of evenings when I am finishing up I often find myself on Cypress Gardens Boulevard passing in front of Hope Church. The cross in front of our Sanctuary is a beautiful sight as you pass by. It is a reminder of the “Beacon of Hope” Jesus Christ gives to us. It also symbolizes the fact that we are “Christ’s Beacon of Hope” to the community around us. In a few weeks we will celebrate the cross—the cross of Jesus Christ. In his life giving sacrifice he draws all of us to himself and gives us gifts to share with the world. May this Easter find you being drawn closer to Jesus Christ so that we can be an even stronger “Beacon of Hope” to the community around us.



Peace.

Pastor Owen

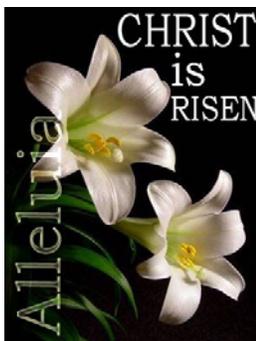
Please Join Us

March 27 — For Our Easter Sunday Breakfast

8:15 a.m. until 12 Noon in McGrath Hall

Members and Friends are cordially invited to stop by for breakfast and fellowship. This is a great opportunity to spend time with old friends and make new ones. Reservations are not necessary. (Freewill Offering collected.)

You are invited to watch the Children’s Annual Easter Egg Hunt in the Gardens of Hope at 9:45 a.m. Come by and ENJOY!



News from Josiah the Church Gecko



Well, this past Saturday, February 27, I tagged along with the Youth of Hope to **Rainbow River State Park** to go canoeing. I know, but Rev. Carriker said it would be fun and he added, “Josiah, you saw the pictures of this place. You and I would put this on our bucket list. You have to go with us.” And so I did.

We left out early. It was about 7 in the morning. I did not know what to expect when they loaded all that food in the truck but I knew one thing—we would eat good. At the Hope Geckobyterian Church where I attend sometimes, we have to bring our own cheese so I was quite impressed when Rev. Carriker had my favorite, cheddar.

It was a wonderful drive up there, from what I am told. So that I would not scare anyone, Rev. Carriker makes me ride in the back of the truck so I really did not get to see the scenery. He told me that it was beautiful and there were a lot of rolling hills—he was impressed that Florida had rolling hills. He also commented on the open farmland and beautiful countryside.

When we arrived at the park we took in the “Frontier Days” celebration. I loved the fresh churned butter and I got to make my own candle. Watching the lady weave was also kind of neat. There was a mountain lap dulcimer band and a pretty good bluegrass band. I loved it all, and from my perch on the inside of Rev. Carriker’s sunhat I could see everything going on through the air holes. As we walked the paths I could not get over the number of turtles and fish we saw. The springs were so clear and beautiful.

Finally we got to the main event—canoeing and kayaking! Well, to say the least, it was FUN. I mean FUNNNNN! I gave myself whiplash from turning and looking so much. I did not want to miss a thing. In all my life I have never seen water so clear, so many turtles, so many big fish and such beautiful vegetation. To top it off the azaleas were blooming and not one gator was spotted the whole trip. The trip downriver was so relaxing and beautiful—however, what goes down in this case must come up. Wow, I was impressed. Rev. Carriker and Mrs. Julie can row. Now don’t get me wrong, I should have expected that, but well, you know. All in all it was a gorgeous day and the weather was warm, but not really warm enough to go swimming—although a couple of the youth did. We had a wonderful time exploring God’s creation and the beauty of the river and we all enjoyed the time we spent together as a group.

A few questions still remain: “Do you really think Miss Stacy knows the way?” “They ate it, but do you think it is good?” “How many sodas are you going to drink?” “O no, this does not look good. Think they can make it back?” “Okay. I count 10, who is missing?” “Did you bring dry clothes to change into?” “Can you get a picture of that?”

Needless to say, a good time was had by all.

Josiah



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING — Easter Sunday, March 27
OGHS envelopes will be provided in the bulletins. Youth will be collecting our “giving fish” in nets as well. Thank you for your participation.

History: Started in 1949, One Great Hour of Sharing is a long-standing ecumenical effort aimed at raising the funds necessary to provide relief and reconstruction for communities in the aftermath of disaster. What started as an hour-long radio appeal has evolved over the years, varying from eight to 29 participating denominations, and has grown to be the most participated-in Offering in the PC(USA). *Today, projects supported by One Great Hour of Sharing are underway in more than 100 countries.*

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

- ◆ Works within communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters. Receives 32% of funds raised.

The Presbyterian Hunger Program

- ◆ Takes action to alleviate hunger and its systemic causes, and helps create access for entire communities to sufficient and healthy food. Receives 36% of funds raised.

Self-Development of People

- ◆ Partners with people and communities, leveraging development and education to alleviate poverty, oppression and injustice. Receives 32% of funds raised.

ORDER FORM



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 _____

From the Deacons' Desk

The Deacons at Hope are a visible group of individuals who are seen each Sunday as they greet you and hand out bulletins, collect the offering and assist with needs. But as a Deacon our role is much more than that. The role of Deacon is one of compassion, witness and service sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, hungry and sick. In this capacity, the Deacons of Hope are charged with compassionate care and attention to needs within the congregation.

In the past, the Deacons' Fund envelopes were collected on Communion Sundays. However, now your contributions are received on any Sunday you wish to donate. For your convenience the white envelopes in the pew racks are for this purpose. These donations are used to help those within our church family. Won't you support this worthy cause knowing that it could help assist someone in our church family? Pastor Owen or any Deacon may be contacted with a request which will be taken under prayerful consideration. Be watching in future newsletters for more information about other ways that the Deacons and others in our church community are helping to reach out to our Hope family.

—Marsha Long, Chairperson of the Deacons

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Presbyterian Women Of Hope

Ladies Craft Day — Saturday, April 16 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Learn to make: Deco Wreath (\$10); Elite Envelopes for tea bags, gift cards, calling cards, etc. (\$5);

Earrings—various colors in pierced or clip (\$10). A Lite Lunch will be served (\$5).

Sign-up sheets will be available by the end of March.

SAVE THE DATE!

Presbyterian Women Annual Ladies' Christmas Tea — Saturday, December 10 — McGrath Hall

Presbyterian Women Thank Offering boxes are available — A way to express your gratitude for the special blessings in our lives. Questions? Please contact PeggyAnn White: paw@krats.com

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HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2110 Cypress Gardens Boulevard
Winter Haven FL 33884-1556
Phone (863) 324-6382; Fax (863) 324-1096
Website: www.hopepreswh.org
E-mail: hope@hopepreswh.org

Address Correction Requested



“LIKE US” ON



MARCH 2016

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

March 13 — 5th Sunday in Lent— Daylight Saving Time begins!

Worship — 8:15 and 10:30 a.m.

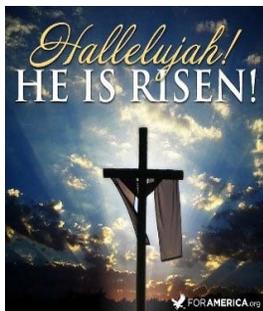
Lenten Soup Luncheon — Donation \$5

March 20 — Passion/Palm Sunday

Worship — 8:15 and 10:30 a.m.

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

Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper



MARCH 27 — EASTER SUNDAY — HE IS RISEN!

Sunrise Worship — Gardens of Hope — 7:30 a.m.

Easter Breakfast — McGrath Hall — 8:15 a.m. to 12 Noon

Children’s Easter Egg Hunt — Gardens of Hope — 9:45 a.m.

Worship — 8:15 and 10:30 a.m.

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering