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The Theology of “Doing” and “Being” Two sides of the same the coin.

Last month at the Finance Committee meeting, several questions were raised; How do we as a church stay solvent and be sustainable? and how do we continue the mission of the Church in Hopewell? There is a legitimate concern that the demographic of our church (70% being over 70 years old), is not conducive to sustain the financial constraints and meet the human resource demands to run the church. Most people in this demographic are retired, live on a fixed income and have limited mobility. Out of this concern, the obvious question is what does it take to attract new generations of worshippers to HUMC, especially the generations X, Y and Z? Over my twenty years in ministry, I have noticed that whenever a church reaches this stage and struggles to attract new members, the first thing that comes to mind is about “doing.” What aren’t we doing right? People say “We have invested so much and we haven’t yet seen a return on our investment.” They ask “How long shall we continue to do this? We are getting too old and can’t do much at this point.” Those questions are certainly legitimate and relevant. But I always wonder whether it is all about “doing?” Don’t get me wrong, I understand that the dynamics of “doing” is essential in the growth of a church. But it is only one side of the coin.

Churches that spend too much time on the “doing” are always caught up in a paralysis and panicking mode. The theology of doing exhausts, discourages and stops the social imagination. In this theology, the end justifies the means. Churches that focus on this path alone decline fast and, in most cases, close down. I believe that “doing” should go together with “being.” I call this duality the theology of the two sides of the coin. Doing and being go together. Before you do, you are. Your essence pre-determines you’re doing. Without your being, there is no doing. Our culture is prone to doing rather than being. Most of us when asked to introduce ourselves tend to talk about what we do instead of who we are. This analogy applies to churches as well. Churches that include the theology of “being” thrive and are always resourceful. To them, the means determines the end. People internalize their mission and vision and stay faithful to it. They know that a greater power is in action and helps grow the seed. People in this theology are bound to one another and to the community. They focus on what makes them what they are. They hold on to the core identity which might be traditional or an emerging one.

In a recent publication **“The Great DE -churching: Who’s Leaving, Why Are They Going and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back?”** the authors argue that in our society, America’s institutions tend to work better for those who belong to a nuclear family, have a college degree and have children after marriage. Those who get off track of this model have serious difficulties in our country. Our institutions are prone to favor the former. The authors parallel this analogy to churches. They contend that the church culture can feel unwelcoming and even shaming to people who are struggling financially or have family structures outside of the model that society favors. According to the authors, modern American churches are financially incentivized to target the wealthy and create a space where those on track feel comfortable. The average American church, the authors muse, is not truly hospitable to the less fortunate, making them feel like outsiders in our midst. I am under no illusion that reversing this trend will fill church pews. But I strongly believe that a church that wants to be relevant, thrive and attract the generations X, Y and Z (which includes many “Nones”) should deconstruct the one-dimensional approach in our society that favors some and ignores others. The church needs to re-discover its true identity, mission and vision. The synergy that makes the church thrive is coupling its doing with its being. It becomes like a tree planted near a river. The prophet Jeremiah put it this way, “But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (Jeremiah 17:7-8).



WE are a home for ALL people to be transformed by the love of God and grow in mind, body, and spirit.

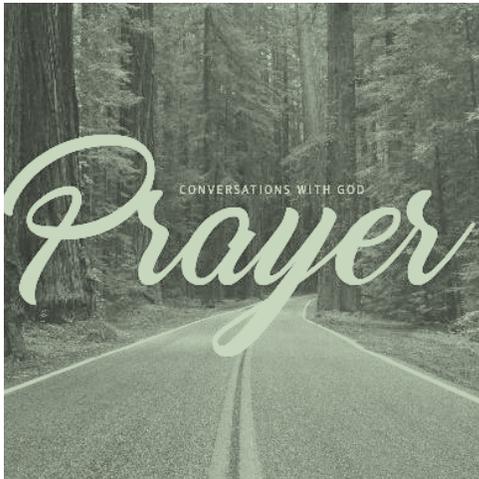
Worship Update



Indoor Worship Update:

At this time wearing a mask during worship is optional. Windows will be opened and fans will be turned on during the service. Hand sanitizer stations will be at the entry doors and nursery care is also available.

Services will continue to be live streamed for those who cannot attend service in person.



Online Prayer Meeting: 7:00pm Wednesday's

Please join us on Zoom for our weekly prayer meetings. Let's gather from our homes to bring our concerns to each other and to the Lord.

The Zoom Meeting ID for Prayer Time is: 867 0701 6102 **or** dial by phone: 1 929 205 6099 and enter the above meeting ID

Upcoming Events

Hopewell Hayride



Starting in September on the Second Saturdays of each month we will be having the.

Hopewell Hayride Show

ADULTS \$15

CHILDREN 12 AND UNDER \$7.50

Tickets sold at the door, credit cards and Pay Pal accepted.

DOORS OPEN: 4:30pm

SHOWTIME 6pm

*Dinner is available in the dining room for purchase.



Community Closet

Every Saturday from 9am to 11:30am

If you are donating clothes please come by when the closet is open a volunteer will be there to take the donation.

If you would like to Volunteer, please contact Irene Ey Roseteapot819@yahoo.com or come by and let us know.

Choir rehearsal

Starting September 6th

Wednesday at 7:30pm

Journey

2nd & 4th Tuesday of each
Month at 7:30pm

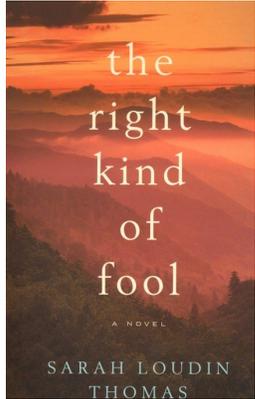


Book Talk

August 15 – Church Sun Room @ 1:00 pm

The Right Kind of Fool by Sarah Loudin Thomas

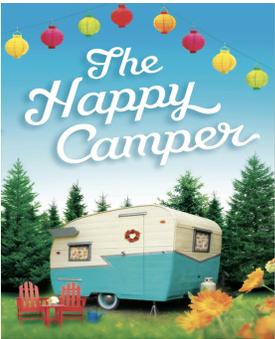
Thirteen-year-old Loyal Raines is supposed to stay close to home on a hot summer day in 1934. When he slips away for a quick swim in the river and finds a dead body, the ripples caused by his discovery will impact the town in ways no one could have imagined.



September 19 – Church Sun Room @ 7:00 pm

The Happy Camper by Melody Carlson

When Dillion Michaels returns home after a breakup, her grandfather gifts her a vintage camp trailer that needs restoration. Intrigued by *the* work, and *the* charming hardware store owner, she is hopeful for a fresh chance at love until a surprise visit from her ex-boyfriend turns everything upside down.



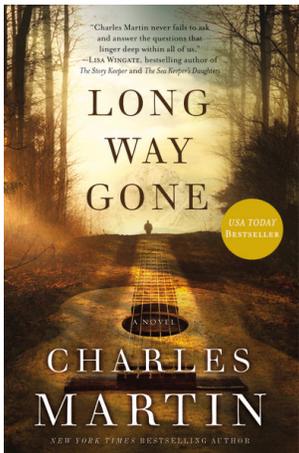
October 17 – Church Sun Room @ 7:00 pm

Long Way Gone by Charles Martin

Musician Cooper O'Connor, who wants all the world has an offer, and leaves home at 18, taking the guitar he has stolen from his tent-preacher father.

Making it big in Nashville, Cooper falls in love with a talented singer, but events leave him injured, both spiritually and physically, sending him home to heal.

"A radical retelling of the story of the prodigal son takes the reader from tent revivals to the Ryman Auditorium to the tender relationship between a broken man and the father who never stopped calling him home."



All are welcome to come join in any or all the discussions.

We meet in the church sun room with prayer time followed by the book discussion. For more information about Book Talk, please contact Sue at sesche26@gmail.com

Mission News

HOPE STARTS HERE



Diaper Drive collection for



July 23 – Aug 27

Sizes 4, 5, 6, & 7 are especially needed.

Thank you for your help!

Please drop your diapers off in the mission's cabinet in the dining hall, near the Sunday School classroom. Thank you so much for your help with this collection. Please pass the word around to your family, friends & neighbors, too. Your generosity will make a difference.



MORE NEWS TO COME...

SPRC

Staff and parish relationship

Meet our new Administrative Associate Katherine Paiz

Tell us about your family?

My family consist of my 1-year-old boy, my amazing mom, and hardworking husband.

How did you become a Christian and what Church do you attend?

I grew up in a very Christ centered home I have always looked up to the Lord. I am currently attending temple jireh in Morrisville PA.

What does your faith mean to you?

“Matthew 17:20”

²⁰ So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

My parents would always reiterate this verse growing up, now as an adult it really speaks daily in my life not being able to see the light at the end of the tunnel but knowing God is always there.

What is your favorite Bible verse?

Philippians 4:13

¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength

What is your hobby? I enjoy taking my toddler to the park I usually find new parks it’s amazing to have a mini buddy.



EVENTS

Greater New Jersey



United
Women
in Faith

Fall Annual Celebration

Saturday, October 21, 2023

Meg Isbitski, LSW, Somerset Co. Dept. of Human Services, Mental Health Administrator:

TEACHING RESILIENCE:

Healthy Perspectives for Children (& all)



9:30am Meet & Greet

10:00am Welcome to all

11:30 Lunch (\$10, please register*)

12:30 Annual Business Meeting

Location (hybrid - live & Zoom):

GNJ Mission Resource Center

205 Jumping Brook Rd.

Neptune Twp, NJ 07753

Ingathering: Stress-Relief "Fidget" Children's Toys

Offering: Camden Neighborhood Center and Pledge to Mission

*Registration: holly.cyrus@faa.gov 609-226-5337

EVENTS



Women's Retreat on LBI: "Embracing Hope"

September 8 -10, Friday-Sunday

Check-in on Friday: 3PM Check-out on Sunday: 2PM

Harvey Cedars Bible Conference
12 Cedars Ave. Harvey Cedars, NJ

Rates for Bayview Lodge – Includes following meals.

(Must bring your own towels, soap, shampoo)

Fri. Dinner at 5:30pm, Sat. B/L/D, Sun. Breakfast

(All rooms have a bay view)

Double Occupancy \$ 233/person

Triple Occupancy \$ 190/person

All lodging, dining and meeting space is handicap accessible; walk-in showers.

Day Guest: \$55/person-Includes all meals

SPECIAL DIETS: \$25 charge per person for gluten free, vegetarian, or dairy free meals. Request must be placed at time of registration.

Questions? Contact: Ellie Furlong, efurlong7@msn.com, C:908-458-5053
Lorraine Donahue Lordhope2@aol.com, C:609-477-4213

Please return the registration form, below, by August 11, 2023!
Keep the flyer and info on back for future reference!

Mail to: Ellie Furlong, 124 Spring Hill Road, Skillman, NJ 08525
Make check payable to **Hopewell United Methodist Women**

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Roommate's Name (s) _____

ANY SPECIAL DIET MEALS REQUIRED?

Shop With HUMC

Shoprite Cards are Available

Did you know you can help HUMC raise funds by purchasing ShopRite gift cards right here at the church?

For every card sold here HUMC gets 5% cash back.

If you are interested in buying your ShopRite cards here, please see Lorraine Donahue or email her at Lordshope2@aol.com





For More Information

**Hopewell United
Methodist Church**
20 Blackwell Ave.
Hopewell, NJ 08525

Phone
(609) 466-0471

Pastor
Rev. Will L. Mafuta

Email
pastor@
hopewellmethodist.org

Office Hours
9:00 am-1:30 pm Tuesday -
Friday

HopewellUMCSecretary
@gmail.com

**Sunday Morning Worship
(online)**
Begins at 10 a.m.

