

Good News from Good Hope!



Day after day... they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. ❖ Acts 5:42
Good Hope Presbyterian Church ❖ The Presbyterian Church in America ❖ February 2007

Parts of the Whole—How Can You Fit in to Serve at Good Hope?

Informal Observations by Mark Hegerle

Can you believe that we've been in our new church building for 12 weeks now? That is truly incredible. While at times it seemed like we'd never finish the building and move in, now it seems like we've always been here. We've met the challenge and built the building, and we've also met the challenge in terms of our giving. Some concerns were expressed at the November congregational meeting, noting that we all need to keep our pledges (the plus building fund) to "pay the bills" and support our missionaries. Thanks to your generous hearts, we've done that—keep it up so that we might continue to grow the church!

While 12 weeks may be too short of a time period to accurately gauge where we are as a church, there are, nevertheless, many good observations to be had. Foremost among them (other than the miraculously-improved singing) is the frequent sighting of new but quickly-becoming-familiar faces among the longer-termed Good Hope worshippers. The good outreach work led by **Mac Macdonald, Joseph Haber, John Hadeed, and Craig Smith** is paying off, and we all need to make efforts to reach out to our visitors and friends. One repeat visitor mentioned that it was the friendly welcome that she received from one particular member that made her want to return the following week. It only takes one friendly person to make a visitor feel at home, so don't be shy about introducing yourself to someone you don't recognize or greeting a new face! One of the big reasons for moving to Fulton (other than to gain control of the thermostat) was because Fulton is a growing area, and we need to reach the searching and lost for Christ where they are.

It is this mission that we must keep our eye on as we perform the many works of the church. It is easy to miss how each little piece comes together to bring glory to God and people to Christ. We are the body of Christ, and all that we do works together to serve Him. To wit, think of the many different jobs that are performed at Good Hope: preaching and Sunday School teaching; special music, nursery service, greeting, and ushering; information distribution through the church website, newsletters, and bulletins; cleaning and all of the maintenance work that takes place. This doesn't even include the services that we perform for one another, like preparing and taking meals to those in need. We all, every one of us, need to be reminded and encouraged that our work glorifies the Lord and reaches people for Christ. It produces a clean, well-maintained building full of delicious refreshments, smiling faces greeting anxious newcomers, and ushers finding them a seat somewhere other than the front row. It includes a preacher, teachers, and youth group leaders opening our eyes to the wonders of Scripture; singers and musicians leading us in praise of our God; and others working behind the scenes to keep us informed of all that is happening in our church.

All of this great effort works together in a grand plan to provide God's people with an opportunity for growth, fellowship, and worship on Sundays. Sunday School at 9:45am builds our understanding of Scripture, so we are better prepared to worship (because we know Who it is that we come to worship). Coming for Sunday School places us at the building in time to encourage one another over a cup of coffee or tea and to meet new people between 10:30-11:00am, when worship begins. Afternoon youth programs bring together the

high schoolers (4:30pm at the Higgins') and middle schoolers (5:00pm at the church), with the idea that we'd all then get together and close the day in an informal (blue jeans welcome!) time of praise and worship at 6:30pm. (Thanks to **Sarah Lantz** for the "hi-tech" PowerPoint slides and well-thought-out songs and Scriptures!) And all of this is supported by preparatory work including building cleaning and maintenance, inside and out, on Saturday mornings. In addition, we have monthly Supper Clubs, which give us all (newcomers especially) a great opportunity to get to know each other in a casual and fun environment.

What's often unknown about these tasks is how open they are for all to participate in. One of two things seem to happen with church positions—those currently doing them think there's no one out there to pitch in and carry some of their burden, and those looking to serve think that there's no available opportunity to serve or that some unique qualification is required in order to serve in a particular capacity. Perhaps other than preaching the Word of God or administering the sacraments, there's no job that a willing heart cannot contribute to. There's no requirement to be an elder or a deacon (or anything else for that matter) for much of the work that we do, nor are there any among us that are so wed to a job that we wouldn't welcome a few good men, women, or children to lend a hand.

I encourage anyone looking to serve to see me, and together we'll find the right ministry or service opportunity for you. As I tell my kids, you don't have to take the whole job to be helpful. Every brick you carry is one less that someone else has to carry, even if it is only one of one thousand! ❖

Focus on Our Missionaries: *The Huber Family in Kiev, Ukraine*

I heard someone recently describe our family by saying, "The Hubers are a family with countless traditions that are really important to them." I really can't be sure if he was making a positive statement about us or not. Perhaps you could think of me as *charmingly Monkish*—referencing the TV character Monk (note the emphasis here on *charming*). Jesus spoke pretty negatively at points about traditions, but there are some very positive things in Scripture about tradition as well.

This brings us to the day after Thanksgiving. Though we've lived here in Ukraine for almost 9 years now, we still try to keep with our US holidays and the accompanying traditions. So on that Friday, we did the normal things. We listened to our first Christmas CD. We watched "*Miracle on 34th Street*" (only the old version, of course). We had our first cup of coffee from the official Christmas mugs. (Anyone besides me drinking from my mug would be guilty of a capital offense worthy of severe rebuke from my kids—especially Nathan: the guardian of traditions.) And we began to decorate the house for Christmas. I was hanging one particular decoration in the same place as always. (Of course, why change the perfect location for the gold-painted-wicker-bells?) I smiled as I went to hang it and saw the same three nail holes that I have used for years now.

Old holes What a joy, I thought, to have *old holes*. They are a reminder of good things and good years past. They save me from thinking. I put in the nails, I hang the bells, and voila—the joy of symmetry! There are many things, many good things, that are like my three *old holes* in the arch over the hallway. Some things need to change. Old wine skins just won't do. But sometimes, *old holes* give us good places to hang the most important things in our life.

In a recent prayer letter that many of you may have received, I wrote about a group of men with whom I have been meeting for several months. Meeting with men for fellowship and prayer—that is a good *old hole*. Reading the Psalms together; praying the Lord's Prayer; reading some great old books together; meeting individually to encourage each other; meditating together on the life of Christ; memorizing Scripture together; exhorting one another to do good; eating together—all of these are *old holes*.

These are good traditions. These disciplines or habits are ways of passing along the faith from one generation to another, from one culture to another. They aren't fancy, but they are tried and true. In that way, my group of men (my band of brothers) and I are seeking to be, well, *monkish* (not like the TV character, but like the guys who gathered together in groups to devote themselves to the Lord). To some extent, all of us could no doubt share our concerns about monks, monasteries, convents, and the like. We would certainly have valid concerns. But there is something attractive to me about a group of men (or women) binding themselves together so that they can learn to love the Lord well and to serve others as an expression of that love. In one sense, that is what we are as a local church. In another sense, I think of this group of men as brothers who have committed together for this purpose of loving the Lord, one another, our church, Kiev, and Ukraine.



As the Lord brings us to mind, pray for us. Pray for us to know more about Jesus. Pray for us to be *monkish* as we use the *old holes* to lead us to love, live, and serve well. And finally, Lauren and I want to say congratulations to you on the new building. We rejoice with you in God's provision and can't wait to worship there with you at some point!

Grace and peace,

Eric for the Huber Family

Join us for Sunday School at 9:45am and Worship at 11:00am each Sunday.
Evening Worship is held each Sunday at 6:30pm.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am High School Youth Group at the Higgins' - 4:30pm Middle School at church - 5pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm	29	30	31 VBS Planning Meeting at the church - 7:00pm	1	2	3 Work Party at the church - 9:00am
4 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am Communion To Be Served High School Youth Group at the Higgins' - 4:30pm Middle School at church - 5pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm	5	6 Deacon Meeting at the church - 7:30pm	7	8 Session Meeting at the church - 7:30pm	9	10 Work Party at the church - 9:00am
11 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am High School Youth Group at the Higgins' - 4:30pm Middle School at church - 5pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm	12	13	14	15	16	17 Work Party at the church - 9:00am
18 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am High School Youth Group at the Higgins' - 4:30pm Middle School at church - 5pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm	19	20	21	22	23	24 Work Party at the church - 9:00am
25 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am High School Youth Group at the Higgins' - 4:30pm Middle School at church - 5pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm	26 Info for March newsletter due to Kate Haber today!	27	28	1	2	3 Work Party at the church - 9:00am

Since God So Loved Us, We Also Ought to Love One Another

You have heard it said that we all want to be loved. I suppose this is true, even with the vast variety of individual personalities and temperaments we possess. We want to be loved, liked, cared for in the eyes of at least someone. But if we all want to be loved, do we all want to love? Someone must provide the love that someone else wants.

We all have a duty to love. Jesus was asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" He answered, "The most important one is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31) We all have a duty to love God and others, yet this duty (as with other duties) is often left undone or performed lazily.

If we define love simply as a feeling, then if we possess the feeling we will be loving. But what happens if we do not possess the feeling? Are we free of the obligation to love? God helps us with our duty by motivating us with His love for us. "This is how God showed His love for us: He sent His one and only Son

into the world that we might live through Him." (1 John 4:9) His model becomes our motivation for keeping a duty that is the most important command we can keep. "We love because He first loved us... Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4:19,11)

I asked earlier, if we all want to be loved, then do we all want to love? Probably not, yet God motivates us by His love for us as expressed most pointedly through the sacrifice of His Son. God further assists us to love through the presence of His Holy Spirit. Paul delineates a list of virtues that God's Spirit actively produces in our lives. At the top of the list is love. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." (Galatians 5:22) God commands us to be loving and helps us to be loving, even if we do not do so perfectly.

As the summer sees a dramatic rise in weddings, the month of February sees more hearts flying around than any other month of the year. The promotion of love will only be exceeded by the number of candidates who await its arrival. Love cannot be bought, but it can be given, so let's give it freely! ❖



Musical Notes from the Ensemble

The musical ensemble is now rehearsing on Sunday evenings at 5:30pm in the sanctuary. All are welcome to join!