

JULY - AUGUST 2024 NEWSLETTER



Bell Tower

First Baptist Church in Hope Valley

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The Hope Valley First Baptist Church family makes followers of Christ and worships God through prayer, fellowship, service and the study of the Holy Bible, testifying to the glory of His Name.

PASTOR'S NOTE

Worshipping in the Spirit

Romans 12:1

David Peterson is head of the Department of Ministry at Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia. As the head of the Department of Ministry, he knows a thing or two about worship. He is certainly acquainted with the controversy surrounding contemporary worship. He opens a book chapter on the subject with:

"If you want to start a lively conversation amongst Christians, introduce the subject of worship! For most of us that means debating styles of music, ways of conducting church services or methods of preaching. Disagreements can be heated, reflecting denominational traditions or individual preferences. Yet dissension can also reveal profound theological differences about the nature and significance of Christian gatherings. For example, to what extent do we meet together to encounter God and to what extent to minister to each other? Is God especially present in the gathering of his people and, if so, how? Is worship fundamentally response to God's word in prayer and praise or is it something more? What is the relationship between congregational worship in the worship or service due to God in everyday life? Is there any warrant in the New Testament for sacred times and sacred places?"

We could further illustrate Dr. Peterson's point if each one of us were to answer his five questions. How would *you* answer them? Now consider how much of your answers are rooted in Scripture and how much is rooted in culture, upbringing, tradition, or just your personality?

For instance, if you are shy and introverted, you are going to answer his first question by saying we gather together to encounter God more than to visit with one another. That fits your personality. On the other hand, if you are something of an extrovert, you see time in church as being about "each other." That's who you are.

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While there are many definitions of corporate worship, any good definition will say something about both loving God and serving others. As I said in an earlier *Bell Tower* article, worship should involve submission to God and service to one another.

Our Lord put it best. When asked which command was the greatest, he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40). In his paraphrase, *The Message*, Eugene Peterson put it this way, “Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.’ This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’ These two commands are pegs; everything in God’s Law and the Prophets hangs from them.”

For this issue of the *Bell Tower*, I want to consider just one verse that speaks of worship, Romans 12:1. “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” As we’ll see, this is a relatively easy verse to understand but a challenging passage to interpret.

The verse begins with a “Therefore.” This presents a challenge because it means we are coming in at the end of a conversation. “Therefore” is a summary word. So to understand Romans 12:1 we need to review Romans 1-11!

Since reviewing the first half of Romans is impractical, we settle for the concise summary in Romans 5:6-11. In these few verses, Paul touches on the state of humanity, the love of God, the means of salvation, God’s mercy, and God’s grace. This describes what God has done for us, these are the “mercies of God” referred to in 12:1. And our response to these mercies is addressed in the rest of 12:1.

First, we are to “present” something. In Paul’s day, this word was used for presenting an animal sacrifice. It is an intentional choice. In this context, the idea is the many deliberate daily choices we make. And what do we present? “Our bodies.” This is everything you are. This is you in word and deed.

Paul is shifting our thinking from Old Testament worship of the occasional offering of an animal to our moment-by-moment offering of everything we are every day. Does this include what we do on Sunday morning? Of course. But it also includes what we do on Sunday afternoon, Sunday night, Monday morning, and every moment of every day for the rest of our lives. Eugene Peterson nicely brings out this idea in his rendering of Romans 12:1, “So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.”

Finally, we come to “spiritual service.” While English translations do different things with these words, I like how William Beck conveys the idea, “and so worship Him as *thinking beings*.”

Our ability to reason, deliberate, consider, reflect, and think things through is a fundamental characteristic of being made in God’s image. This being the case, the worship God desires is a thoughtful, rational worship of obedience expressed by people whose minds are being transformed and renewed by God (see the next verse, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect”). This is worship that shapes your mind, heart, attitude, character, and being. It can be seen in how you act and heard in how you talk. It has nothing to do with IQ, but it believes that what you think, read, and choose results in what you are and what you are becoming. As the Psalmist put it, we become what we worship, “Those who make them [idols] will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them” (Psalm 115:8). Live in the scriptures and strive to be like Christ and you will!

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So is healthy corporate worship singing a hymn written by Charles Wesley in the 1700s? Yes. Is healthy corporate worship singing a song Judy wrote last week? Yes! Do we worship best by praying in our heart to God or speaking to the visitor sitting in the next aisle? Yes! Is worship about God or is it about others? Yes. The only thing healthy spiritual worship is not about is you!

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Articles for the Bell Tower are due on the third Friday of each month. Please email your articles to Maria Gill at fbhvsecretary@verizon.net.



RHODE ISLAND COMMUNITY
FOOD BANK

Local Food Pantries & Meal Sites

We work with more than 143 food pantries and meal sites which distribute perishable and nonperishable foods that you can choose from based on your dietary needs. Find one local to you. Enter your zip code in the search bar on the map. Click on

any location for hours and details. To see our full Food Assistance List, organized by city and town, go to <https://rifoodbank.org/find-food/>



Summer

**FOOD
DRIVE**

Please donate non-perishable food items, check for expiration dates. We deliver non-perishable food items after 2nd Sunday of the month.

The best non-perishable foods to donate:

Canned beans, dry beans, peanut butter or other nut butters, rolled oats, canned fruit in juice - not in light or heavy syrup, canned vegetables, with no or low-sodium, low-sodium soups, canned tuna in water, canned chicken, brown rice, quinoa, nuts, unsalted seeds, unsalted shelf stable milk and milk substitutes, whole grain pasta, low-sodium pasta sauce, popcorn kernels (not microwave popcorn),

canned stews, unsweetened apple sauce, whole grain, low-sugar cold cereals, olive or canola oil, canned tomatoes, dried fruits, no sugar added honey, chicken, beef and vegetable broths, and stock.



July 1-August 30, the
Church office will be
closed on Tuesdays and
Thursdays.



- 1 – Mark Bragger
- 3 – Daverlyn Silva
- 9 – Luella Bragger
- 10 – Lois Tate
- 10 – Donald Wilcox
- 12 – Lois Reynolds
- 14 – Gayle Ashworth
- 25 – Alina Menzies
- 29 – Michelle Vachon
- 31 – Debbie Baton



Happy Independence Day

BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE
LORD; AND THE PEOPLE WHOM HE HATH
CHOSEN FOR HIS OWN INHERITANCE.

– Psalm 33:12

Happy 4th of July!



Thanks to
Judy, Mickey,
Boden, and
Gunnar for
helping
beautify our
church
grounds!



- 1 – Michelle Dair
- 1 – Cathy LaFountain
- 2 – Alan Kenney
- 8 – Eleanor Caswell
- 8 – Karin Hutchinson
- 12 – Olivia Greene
- 12 – Bruce Wilcox, Sr.
- 16 – Harold West
- 16 – Zachary Tassias
- 19 – Tom Tassias
- 29 – Jason Powell
- 22 – Sherryl Stedman
- 24 – Lisa Palmer
- 28 – Keith Gould
- 28 – Marjorie Rekowski
- 31 – Trevis Barthalow



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Mondays at 7:00 p.m.

In the parlor.



MEMORIAL DAY PICNIC









Children's Corner

Devotional: Do It Unto Jesus

Children's Devotion on doing everything as if to Jesus

Read: [Colossians 3:22-25](#) (ESV)

This is something we all need to remember. If we see our chores at home, or the school projects we don't particularly like as something done for the Lord, then that will change our whole outlook on it.

Whatever we do, do it heartily, as to the Lord (v:23). That means doing it without grumbling and complaining—as if what we are doing is done for Jesus. And this doesn't just mean when it's expected of us, or when the teacher is "watching" us, and it also doesn't mean we do it to be "men-pleasers" as in pleasing others and gaining approval in their eyes, but whatever we do, we do out of our love for Jesus. We need to be whole-hearted and sincere in everything we do no matter how boring it may seem to us.

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“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”

- [Matthew 25:40](#) (ESV)

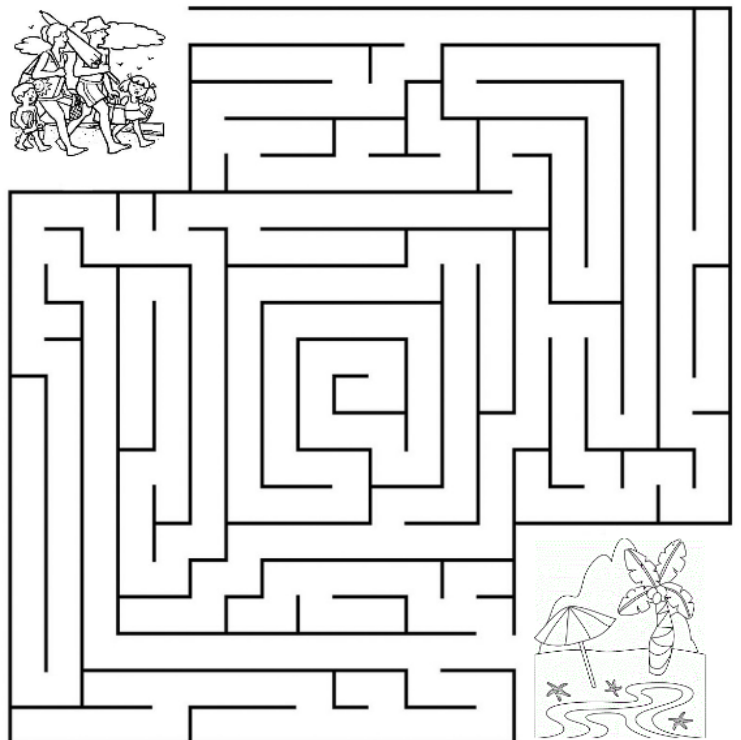
About Jesus

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SZFFQJVSNISFRGTGPJKU
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WTEFXVTDNEIRFSVORMUS
BCRKENICFNECXGTGIADON
JESIETAGPSOCKENNOENV
URELAEHJRURGIALFIURS
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| • JESUS | • MESSIAH | • KING |
| • SAVIOUR | • HEALER | • FORGIVENESS |
| • HELPER | • FRIEND | • LORD |
| • CROSS | • SINS | • TEACHER |
| • RESURRECTION | • LIGHT | • GATE |
| • VINE | • FIRST | • LAST |
| • WAY | • TRUTH | • LIFE |
| • LOVE | • BELIEVE | • LEADER |
| • CREATOR | • RIGHTEOUSNESS | |

SUMMER MAZE

Can you help them find the beach?



Semi-Annual Meeting July 14



Immediately
after the service.
Please stay.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PRAYER CONCERNS:

- Please pray for and consider financially supporting our missions program, such as the Providence Rescue Missions run by Director Sean Carew. PRM provides chapel services, dinner, emergency shelter, a food pantry, and clothing to the community. It welcomes anyone in need 24/7. This summer, there is a matching program for donations up to \$10,000. You can send your donations via VENMO @[FirstBaptistChurch-HopeValley](#) or write a check to First Baptist Church in Hope Valley with "Providence Rescue Missions" on the memo line.
- Please continue to pray for Jackson. His brain is healing properly and responding well to therapy, especially with his left hand and arm. Pray for reduced pressure in his brain and for healing through music and stories, both of which he loves.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR PRAISE TEAM SINGERS

FOR JULY 28, AUGUST 4, AND AUGUST 11

PRACTICE IS EVERY SUNDAY, AT 9 AM

MISSIONS' MOMENT

Please prayerfully consider your giving when you fill out the "Faith-Giving Pledge Card" in September. This will help us better understand what will be available for Missions for the coming year.

Any questions, see Missions Comm. members:
Susan Andrews, Ann Marie Chevalier, Jay Menzies, Judy Noel, and Tammy Stone.

Send a card or note to encourage and uplift someone's spirits. Send to:

Elaine Lewis, 1 Twig Drive, Westerly, RI, 02891.

Lou & CJ Doyle, 135A Fenner, Hill Rd., Hope Valley, RI 02832.

Nancy Hinchliffe, 12 Whispering Pines, Wyoming, RI 02898

