

Hilltop Hallelujah

October 2018

Volume 7, Issue 4

In this issue:

Pastor's Message	p. 1-2
Daycare Director	p. 1-2
Pastoral Search	p. 3
Opportunities to Serve	p. 3
Serving in October	
MOPS	p. 4
New England Seafarers	
Coffee Time / POTL	
Music	p. 5
Free Piano	
Special Dates	p. 6
Study & Gather	p. 6
Adult Sunday School	
Children's Church	
Covenant Kids Congo	p. 7
Cookie Walk	p. 8
ATOR	p. 8-9
Recipe Corner	p. 10

from the Interim Pastor's Perspective

Question: How do we voice our belief that Jesus is the only way to heaven [Acts 4:12], without being viewed as intolerant of someone who thinks differently? Considering our current political climate and as November's elections approach, that question seems even more relevant today. Serving as an intern while attending Stanford University, Scott Scruggs developed a thesis published by Campus Crusade for Christ entitled *Truth or Tolerance*. In the preamble of his publication, Scruggs asks: "If I were to ask you what our culture deemed more valuable, truth or tolerance, what would you say? Are we not called to be confident carriers of the truth of the Gospel? Then how do we voice our belief that Jesus is the only way without being considered intolerant of someone who thinks differently? This is one of the difficult dilemmas facing Christians today."

The answer, however, is not simple. Responding to a renewed "tolerance revolution in our culture" requires careful and articulate analysis of the nature of the argument. Why do I say this?

(continued on page 2)

Hilltop Preschool and Daycare

It is hard to believe that we are already a full month into the new school year and that fall is officially here! October is going to be a busy month with lots of fun events planned for the kids here at Hilltop.

Monday, October 8th, is picture day! Lifetouch will be here in the morning to photograph your child. You may also do sibling pictures if you like. There is no obligation to buy the pictures once they come in.



As a thank you to all our parents for entrusting us with the care of your child/ren, breakfast will be on us on Wednesday, October 10th! Come a little earlier than drop-off time and enjoy a nice home cooked breakfast here with your child or children. Or, if you are in a rush, there will be to-go containers for you to pack yourself a nice breakfast to enjoy when you get to work.



To get into the spirit of fall the three and four year old classroom will be taking a field trip to Fair Weather Acres in Rocky Hill on Friday, October 12th. The kids will get to play in their corn pit, go on a hay ride, play some other games and pick a pumpkin to take home. A school bus equipped with seat belts will take us there and bring us back.



If you are interested in getting a little exercise and also help out your community you can participate in Cromwell's *Feeding Our Neighbors Walk*. The walk is on Sunday, October 14th from 1:00-3:00 pm and all money raised will go the Cromwell Food Bank. If you are unable to walk that day, please consider sponsoring someone who is walking as a few daycare teachers will be participating. There are envelopes on the sign in table if you are interested.

On Wednesday, October 31st, the three and four year old classes will also be going to Covenant Village, a retirement community about a ¼ mile down the road from Hilltop. The Covenant Village bus will be picking the kids up here so they can parade around in their costumes and sing some songs for the residents!

(Interim Pastor's Message, continued from page 1)

Because evangelicalism's accusers have developed new tactics taking aim at a target more difficult to defend or support. Arguing against Christians for being intolerant is no longer an accusation of *false teaching*, but rather of *false practice*. Scroggs clarifies: "This new attack doesn't challenge the *truth* of [the Bible's] moral claims, but the legitimacy of making such claims. Christians are being silenced, not by superior ideas, but by our culture's impeachment of moral absolutes and inauguration of moral openness", meaning *relativism*.

In our culture, many people believe that the only real sin is to not accept or to be intolerant of other people's beliefs. "Openness" or "uncritical tolerance" has become our moral standard. Consequently, people who seem intolerant are simply labeled as "wrong."

According to the *Barna Report*, nearly 70% of our population believes "there is no such thing as absolute truth." The result of this philosophy in our society is that we have replaced truth with relativism. According to a national poll (*Postmodern Times*) 88% of evangelical Christians claim that the Bible is the "written word of God and accurate in all it teaches," yet 53% also believe "there are no absolutes!" When such contradictions exist—even within the church—a standard of tolerance becomes arbitrary and variable because it is subject to interpretation of an underlying bias. Listen: "If our goal is just more tolerance, then discrimination isn't wrong in a moral sense, it's only offensive" (Scroggs, p. 4).

A Christian response to the tactic that indicts the legitimacy of absolute truth can be to recognize we have more reason than anyone to abhor discrimination and prejudice that "intolerance" of absolute truth promotes. God hates injustice and loves to liberate the oppressed (Isaiah 61:8; Jeremiah 4:2). Therefore, a Christian perspective should transcend cultural, racial, and class distinctions and support those principles established in the biblical framework as "absolute truth." Scroggs states: "Justice and equality will become realities not by superficially incorporating tolerance, but by embracing absolute truth . . . that includes the foundation for both moral law and human value—and an unwavering truth which . . . demands intolerance of sin. It is a truth that only a God who is a righteous Judge and loving Creator can establish.

As Christians we are called to action. So how do we reach a world that is choking on its own tolerance? We must be reminded of the authority and power of God's truth. As instructed in Eph. 6, we must "resist and stand firm." In a culture bearing down on Christians, we must remain steadfast and resist evil. The late Ray Stedman said it this way: "Truth is reality, the way things really are. Therefore it is the explanation of all things. You know you have found the truth when you find something that is wide enough and deep enough and high enough to encompass all things. That is what Jesus does." The writer of Hebrews says "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and yes, forever" (Heb. 13:8).

If you are walking in the truth, you will discover there is a time for both tolerance and intolerance. Jesus associated with the sick, the poor, the marginalized, and the rejected. He shared meals with tax collectors, prostitutes, and criminals. Christ doesn't judge us by our skin color or social status, but by the condition of our hearts. Yet, as accepting and tolerant as Jesus is, He is very rigid about the exclusiveness of His claims. Of all the choices in life, He tells us there is only one way, one truth, and one life – His (John 14:6). That means sharing truth is sharing Christ, regardless the legitimacy of making such a claim.

Pastor Kevin

(Daycare Director's Message, continued from page 1)

Just a reminder that all children, 6-59 months, attending a daycare center are required to receive at least one dose of the influenza vaccination now through December 31st. If this is their first season being vaccinated against influenza then they shall receive 2 doses of vaccine. It is a requirement by the Connecticut Department of Early Childhood Education that children who have not received the flu vaccine by December 31st must be excluded from child care for the duration of influenza season (through March 31st). There are exceptions if your child has a medical contraindication or for religious beliefs. Please see the information sheet that was placed in your child's cubby for details on the exceptions. Once your child has had their flu vaccine, please bring in either their updated immunization record or the slip the doctor/nurse gave you indicating the date your child received the vaccine.

Pastoral Search Committee Update

I am writing on behalf of the Pastoral Search Committee to keep you, the congregation, updated on the progress of the work of the committee. We are meeting regularly and receiving guidance from The Rev. Howard Burgoyne and his staff of the East Coast Conference office of the Evangelical Covenant Church. The Covenant has a process in place for searches, and we are following those steps. Barbara Damon has made a poster outlining the seven phases of the search process and she has placed it in the narthex, and we will move the green circle forward as each phase is completed. I'm listing those for you here:

1. Search team organization phase
2. Information gathering phase;
3. Contact phase
4. Candidating phase
5. Call phase
6. Commitment phase
7. Ministry launch phase



We have completed Phase 1 and are working

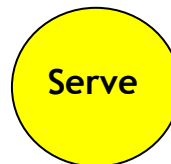
on Phase 2. In the not too distant future you all will be hearing from the committee as it seeks to gather important data and your thoughts on a number of points. So, stay tuned...and please respond when the time comes. Your input is important!

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to get in touch with me or any member of the search committee (keeping in mind, however, that most of our work must remain confidential):

Brian Armet, Jonathan Beatty, Barbara Damon, Amanda Drew, Jim Hite, Liz Pierson, Laura Winoski. And very importantly, keep praying for the committee members, the work of the committee, and for Hilltop as we travel on this journey of discernment.

Carolyn Johnson, Chairperson, Pastoral Search Committee

OPPORTUNITIES TO



Communion: October , 2018		Brian & Dale Chiffer		
	GREETERS	USHERS	READERS	COFFEE TIME
Oct. 7	Barbara Damon	Nicole & Jordyn Pekarovic	Dale Comstock	WIDE OPEN!
Oct. 14	Lorrey Hamilton	Brian & Dale Chiffer	Rick Brown	
Oct. 21	Dale Comstock	Barbara Damon, Laura Winoski	Barbara Damon	
Oct. 29	Shari Pekarovic	Jim & Jenn Hite	Sally Huggins	



MOPS, Mothers of Preschoolers, is held on Tuesdays, October 9 and 23, 5:30 PM. Thank you so much to the faithful meal providers; would you like to join their ranks? There is a signup sheet in the narthex if you are able to provide supper for the moms. If cooking is not your forte, we welcome monetary donations so a meal can be bought!

New England Seafarers Mission

On Sept. 14 we sent 50 more watch caps and one balaclava to the Seafarers Mission. These were in addition to the 72 Watch Caps, 57 Ditty Bags, and 4 Balaclavas sent on April 25.

The next shipment, and last one before Christmas, will be in early November in time for Packing Day.

So keep knitting! -- If you're new in the church and like to knit, or would like to learn how to knit, see Gerry Morrison. She will provide you with instructions and yarn – and will even teach you how if you are just learning to knit. You will need a No. 8 knitting needle.

Gerry's phone number is 860-632-1716, her e-mail address is grrymor@gmail.com.



COFFEE TIME

Coffee Time is an opportunity to connect with friends after worship. Additional hosts are welcome and needed!

The task is easy - (bring a snack, coffee creamer, and juice).

There is a signup sheet in the narthex.



POTL

Pick of the Litter

October's POTL on Saturday, October 20, will be the final service opportunity at Pierson Park.

If you can help this month, please sign the poster in the narthex (so Carolyn knows how many doughnuts to bring!) This is not limited to just church members! Teens- invite one of your friends to join us!

FYI – Community Service is a requisite for high schoolers!





October 31, 1517 is the purported date on which Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg Castle church in Germany, beginning a movement that profoundly changed Europe (which was not his original intent!). The date is recognized as Reformation Day. Last year, on the 500th anniversary of this event, celebrations took place around the world. This year Reformation Sunday (the Sunday before the 31st) is October 28. Most churches do not plan anything special on Reformation Sunday, although it might be mentioned in the bulletin or the congregation might sing “A Mighty Fortress.” The most famous tune to come out of the Reformation, of course, is the one I just mentioned, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”, or, in German, “Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.” The hymn was composed by Martin Luther (who, by the way, was extremely interested in music, wrote many hymns, and, by all accounts, loved to sing). Many organists try to include some acknowledgement of the day by including a piece that alludes to the Reformation, and “Ein feste Burg” is certainly one of the go-to tunes. Many, many composers – J.S. Bach among them - have arranged the melody for various instrumentations, including the organ. I will be playing Toccata on “Ein feste Burg” by Craig A. Penfield for the postlude on October 28. The word “toccata” comes from the Italian toccare, which means “to touch,” and toccatas are certainly among the flashy pieces of the organ repertory!

Carolyn Johnson, Director of Music; carerjoh@sbcglobal.net

Piano Needs a New Home!

Pastor Scott and Robin left their piano in the parsonage when they moved, and we need to find a new home for it. If you might be interested, please speak to Carolyn Johnson or send her an email (carerjoh@sbcglobal.net). The piano is free, but whoever takes it will have to pay for moving it.

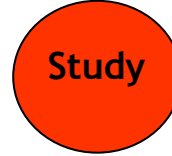


Leadership Team – Vicki Brown, Barbara Damon, Carolyn Johnson, Sally Huggins, Laura Winoski and ex officio Pastor Kevin.

Pastoral Search Committee – Brian Armet, Jonathan Beatty, Barbara Damon, Amanda Drew, Jim Hite and Carolyn Johnson.

BIRTHDAYS			ANNIVERSARIES		
Lanna Hallden	10/2	Ethan White	10/23	Dale & Betty Comstock	10/25
Joe Pessa	10/4	Marilyn Nelson	10/24	Carroll & Marilyn Nelson	10/25
Leah White	10/7	Carroll Nelson	10/26	Brian & Joan Armet	10/28
Ray Kliewer	10/8	Carola Chaffin	10/31		
Barbara Damon	10/18				
Jim Hite	10/21				

OPPORTUNITIES
TO



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Adult Sunday School follows Coffee Time.

Resolve to study God's Word and the impact it can have on YOUR life and on the lives of those around you!



CHILDREN'S CHURCH

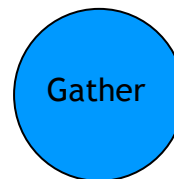
Children through second grade are invited to leave worship just prior to the Pastor's Message and head downstairs for a lesson planned just for them!

Helpers are needed to help Ms. Mel during this time

Please sign up in the narthex!



OPPORTUNITIES
TO



More Opportunities to GATHER:

- Coffee Time
- Adult Sunday School
- Lunch Bunch
- Men's Breakfast
- Pick of the Litter
- Children's Church
- Feeding Our Neighbor Walk
- Cookie baking (at Sally's house, Nov. 4 after church)

Youth Group will resume soon!

Thank you to Shari Pekarovic and Laura Winoski who will continue to plan events for the youth. Among the things that will be forthcoming are fundraisers to replenish our CHIC and campership funds.





When you get a chance please take a look at the bulletin board downstairs in the hallway above the hooks. You will see pictures of two children, Elie and Bijoux, that Hilltop Preschool and Daycare is now sponsoring. Both of these children live in a poor area of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The HIV and AIDS crisis has severely damaged the social fabric of their entire communities, leaving many children without parents. Many families live in small mud and brick homes with tin or thatched roofs. A typical diet consists of maize, peanuts, cassava, beans, sweet potatoes and citrus fruits.

These sponsorships are through Covenant Kids Congo which is powered by World Vision. World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. Our sponsorship will help to provide Elie, Bijoux and their communities with feeding programs to help malnourished children, along with access to clean water, immunizations, vitamins and deworming.

We want to help and give back to those less fortunate than us and hope that you would consider joining us by sponsoring a child of your own. The cost is \$40.00 per month which will make such a difference to so many.

How do you sponsor a child?

First, choose a child to sponsor. Then in approximately 10 days, you'll receive your sponsorship Welcome Kit in the mail. Your kit includes a photo, more information about your sponsored child, and a postcard that you can send to him or her.

You can send an email to your child right away by creating a My World Vision account. The email will be printed off in Congo and delivered to your child.

In the next few months, watch the mail for your first letter from your sponsored child. Once a year, you'll receive an annual progress report about your sponsored child with a new photo. You'll also receive monthly community updates via email.

How does child sponsorship work?

Sponsorship helps children living in extreme poverty by developing programs that create sustainable development for the whole community. The benefits you help provide will extend to each child's family, their community, and other children in need.

That's because the Covenant Church and World Vision plan and work alongside local leaders to help build healthy communities for children in the city of Gemena. The ECC, World Vision, and the Covenant Church of Congo partner with your sponsored child's community over the long term to address critical needs — ultimately helping the community rise out of poverty.

"Thank you to all those who are sponsoring children here, because you are giving hope," said Fred Kasongo, the director of the northwest zone for World Vision DR Congo. "You cannot imagine how what you are doing has contributed to the well-being of children here."

Will you get to know my sponsored child?

You'll have the chance to build a one-to-one relationship with your sponsored child that could change both your lives through letters, photos, birthday cards, and more. "When I got a letter for the first time, I received it with joy," said Benedicte, a 12-year-old girl in the CKC program. "I wrote to my sponsor to say that I like to play with my friends, and I love him very much. I want to tell my sponsor thank you."

Thank you for your consideration,
Laura Winoski

COOKIE WALK

Cookie Walk X is only 9 weeks away!

Cookie Walk is how the church earns money for our “campership fund” and CHIC fund (these are non-budgeted items) We depleted a lot of the money this year as we funded several youth and adult trips:

- Lanna Hallden received \$360 to help pay for her first week at Camp Squanto in June 2018
- 4 teens and 2 adults had their entire trip to CHIC, July 2018, paid for (about \$6000.00)
- Sally Huggins received \$600 toward her mission trip to Canada, September 2018

So, we need to refill the coffers!

Cookie Walk X is Saturday, December 1, 9 am – noon. Cookie Walk is also a non-budgeted event that relies solely on generous donations from bakers, crafters and those who provide financial support. In addition, we rely on volunteers who will help set-up (and clean up) the church and help on the day of CW!

How you can help:

- bake cookies or bars yourself - or if you don't bake -
- donate ingredients for those who do (list in narthex)
- keep crafting!
- sign up to help before & after CW
- get gift cards or gift certificates that can go in gift baskets
- provide items for gift baskets (list forthcoming)



Items for gift baskets **are not limited** to what's on the list of suggested contents! Use your imagination! We will use whatever you provide!

Items for baskets need to be at the church no later than Nov. 21, the Sunday BEFORE Thanksgiving! The baskets tend to sell well and are a “bigger ticket item” but they do require time and planning to put together.

There will be a Cookie Baking afternoon at Sally Huggins' after church on Sunday, Nov. 4. If you want to get together to be creative, start making your list of cookies and ingredients you need and we'll see how many we can get donated. Let Sally know if you plan to attend!

ATOR A Tour of Roses

Thank you Hilltop for helping me answer the call I received last November, 2017. I was reading a “blog” about “A Tour of Roses” trip in early 2017 and I felt God was telling me “it's time for you!” I called Sally Klein O'Connor and told her of my revelation and she said, “there's a trip to Israel next month”. I said that was way too soon because

1. I didn't have a passport and
2. I was busy baking cookies!

She said to keep checking the website (improbablepeople.org) because a trip to Canada might be in the works for 2018!

Here is a short synopsis of past ATOR trips: In 2009 Sally Klein O'Connor led the first “Tour of Roses” to Poland and Germany; this was actually her 3rd trip to these countries. *“It is our belief that God wants to heal the wounds of the past. Not that we should ever forget but, perhaps, as we remember together, we can learn how to love - ourselves and each other - as God loves us.”*

In 2010 ATOR returned to Poland and again in June 2012 when they handed out 4000 roses in Warsaw. 2013 saw ATOR in Berlin where the team distributed 5000 roses.

In April 2013 they were in Belfast; April 2014 in Munich and in September 2014 again in Poland. Budapest was the destination in 2015. In 2016 Bethlehem and Jerusalem received 7500 roses. In early 2017 a team of 16 was in Brussels and last December a small team of 5 was in Israel. WOW! What a history!



This is 1500 roses – I can't imagine preparing 5000! We spent three days getting these ready to distribute and then got 1500 more!

In preparing for my participation the first order of business was to get a passport (and it wasn't even stamped as we crossed the border from International Falls, MN to Ft. Frances, Ontario!) Beginning in late spring the team "met" once or twice a month, on Friday nights at 7 PM West Coast Time (10 PM in CT), via Zoom meetings, so I knew everyone by the time Sept. arrived, though you never really know someone until you live with them!

I saw and heard so many new things and am so grateful to you and to God for bringing us all together!

I am looking forward to telling you more about my Tour; suffice it to say that we experienced many "open doors", doors that under normal circumstances would have been closed! Here's one example: → we had no problem being allowed in this hospital



Ken (CA), Lura (AZ), Pastor Sandy (Ft. Frances) & Yurgen (Emo)



Teens call this "the pit" – the high school administrator was so surprised that the kids let us be on their turf!



We probably gave away 50 roses to teens on their lunch break!



Recipe Corner

Date Nut Squares

2 sticks butter } mix well
2 cups sugar }

Add: 4 eggs
2 cups flour
½ tsp. salt
2 tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. vanilla
2 cups chopped nuts
2 cups chopped dates

This recipe came from a Bloodmobile volunteer many years ago. Delicious!

Mix all together – batter will be very thick
Grease or spray 13 x 9 pan
Bake for 1 hour at 350°
When completely cool cut into squares and sprinkle confectioner's sugar on top.

Freezes well.

Optional: When cool, cut into only 8 squares and wrap each piece in plastic wrap and put them all in a zip lock bag. Do not add the confectioner's sugar until you are ready to use them. Freeze. When needed, take out as many pieces as you need and cut each section into 4 pieces. In a big hurry? Microwave for 10 seconds and then dust on the sugar.



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Circles of Life in Christ

