

In Touch with Hope

919 Grand Ave

HOPE REFORMED CHURCH

Phone: 712-262-3016

www.spencerhope.org

August 26, 2009

Join us Sundays at 9:00 a.m. (sanctuary) or at 10:30 a.m. (Harbor of Hope)

Living the Adventure. . .

I was Taught...

A while back I had the opportunity to hear Craig Groeschel, the pastor of LifeChurch.TV in Edmond, Oklahoma speak at a church leadership conference. Groeschel's church is pioneering the use of the internet as a way to do church and uses the multi-site approach to host over 50 weekend worship experiences in 13 different locations throughout the United States.

His talk was entitled "I was taught, and I thought..." He then gave a list of ways God has been changing his thinking about the church. Recently I was looking through my notes from that conference and was struck by how much Groeschel's list reflects some of my current thinking. And so, I'd like to share some of these things with you:

**I was taught, and I thought that the church should be a safe place...
but I'm learning that the church should become dangerous again.**

A lot has been done in the past several years to help the church become more seeker-sensitive. There has been a recognition that our culture no longer reflects the Western European heritage that created so much of church experience in the 19th and 20th centuries. American Christians have become much more conscience of the need to conduct worship in a way that is relevant to people who have little or no Christian training.

But at the same time, there is a risk that as we try to make church "safe" for people unfamiliar with God that we will also make God appear to be safe. That is, in order to make church attractive there is a risk that we will downplay things like sin, judgment and hell in order to keep people comfortable. Instead of a living, dangerous God we might make God into one more thing people can try in order to get a better life.

I'm not saying that we need to act like characters out of a Nathaniel Hawthorne novel. We want to continue to be friendly; to expect nonChristians to be present in our worship; and to use language and modes of communicating that will make sense to 21st century Americans. But we also must let the Bible speak for itself. We cannot gloss over the parts where God strikes sinners dead or soft pedal the Biblical calls for repentance and total commitment to Jesus Christ. Attending Hope Church ought not to be like attending a self-help class or yoga, it ought to be an encounter with the holy, omnipotent Creator of the universe. And that can be dangerous.

**I was taught, and I thought that my highest calling was to build my church...
but I'm learning that I'm called to build the kingdom.**

I'll be honest: I want Hope Church to be a successful church. I want our worship services to be well-attended. I want our giving to be sufficient to cover our budget (I'd love it if our giving exceeded our budget!) I want our youth groups and our children's ministry and our small groups to grow in number. I'm fully invested in Hope Church's mission and development.

But when I read Matthew 16:18 I don't see Jesus saying that He will build Russell's church, or even Hope Church. Instead, it says: "I will build *my* church." And I realize that Jesus' church is not restricted to the church I am pastoring. In Spencer, Jesus' church includes Dayspring Assembly and Bethany Lutheran and Living Word and a bunch of others. Around the world, Jesus' church includes not just the Reformed Church in America but also Baptist churches and Episcopal churches and Presbyterian churches and mission outposts in Haiti and Africa and so much more.

And so I need to remind myself that a "win" for Jesus' church in Spencer is a win for the team I play on, whether that win is assigned to Hope Church or First Baptist or Grace Methodist or whoever.

**I was taught, and I thought that success is only found in big numbers...
but I'm learning that the scorecard is changing.**

I am a pastor who counts. I do think numbers matter. As Rick Warren says: "Every number represents an ever living, never dying soul." And so, every person who participates in a program at Hope Church matters immensely, and should be counted. We should want as many people to be involved with Hope Church as possible.

But, as I said at Celebration Sunday, I also need to remember that bigger numbers are not all that matters. We all need to be growing in our faith. The Christian life is not meant to be static. That's why we set as our vision for the coming year that each of us will take steps forward in our relationship with Jesus.

Groeschel had an interesting way of putting it. He suggested that there are 3 possible ways a Christian can relate to the message of Jesus:

- 1 ___ I believe in the gospel enough to benefit from it.
- 2 ___ I believe in the gospel enough to contribute comfortably.
- 3 ___ I believe in the gospel enough to give my life to it.

The challenge is for all of us to become line 3 believers. Our goal for this year is that we all take steps in that direction.



Upcoming Services

Sanctuary - 9:00 a.m.

The Junction – Harbor Room - 10:30 a.m.

August 30: *Cardboard Testimonies* - 1 Timothy 1:12-17

Because You Asked...

Sept. 6: *How Do We Hear From God?* • Pastor Jay

September 13: *Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?*

• Pastor Russell

Thank You Note:

"Thanks to everyone who helped make the Extreme Am 6 and Revive Band weekend such a great success! Thank you to those who provided food for the bands and to Hope Church for being our rain location for the Saturday night concert. Your support and encouragement for this event is appreciated."

Ronnie/Kim Smith & the Extreme Am team

Affirming God's Servants...

...The list is too long to thank everyone who had a part in Celebration Sunday at the park last Sunday – so we are just going to say a big **THANK YOU**. It was an awesome day!!!!

...Thank you to Donna Graham and Laura Holt for sharing their talents by leading the Longhouse/Northshire Services this past Sunday.

Sunday Morning Opportunities

Harbor Beach (3, 4, & 5 year olds), Kingdom Kids (K-5th), 6th – 12th graders and adult studies will begin this Sunday, 10:15 – 11:30 a.m.

Adult Studies:

- Paul Vande Berg will be leading the **Sunday School Guide class**. The theme this quarter is "Covenant Communities". The class will meet in the Fireside Room.
- Greg Ebeling will be leading a men's study using the book **Uncommon** by Tony Dungy. Men of all ages are invited to this group and they will meet in the Grace Room.

There will be no Sunday morning opportunities on Sunday, September 6.

JOIN US for Leadership Training for Small Groups on

Sunday, August 30, 6-7:30 p.m.

We would like to have at least one representative from each small group at this leadership training, but **everyone is welcome!** Ice Cream Sundaes will be served.

Did you loan VBS a green picnic basket with greenery to be used as a prop? If so, please pick it up from the church office.

Thank you!



Attention Children's Church Parents: There is no children's church this Sunday, August 30 & September 6. It will resume on Sept. 13. All pre-school children ages 3-5 are welcome to attend.

Keep in Touch with
Our College Kids



NOTE-A-MONTH: Yes, it is that time of year again, as our college students return to school. For some it will be their first year and for others their last year, but no matter what year, they like to hear from home. The Outreach/Evangelism Committee would

like the participation of the congregation in a letter writing or email campaign to college students. Each month the student list will be rotated with participants sending a letter, note, or card to a different student each month. **We have 30 college students this year, so we need lots of participants. SIGN-UP TODAY** on the lobby bulletin board or call the church office (3016).

ATTENTION PARENTS OF COLLEGE AGE YOUTH –

Just a reminder to turn in the post card that you received in the mail regarding if your youth would like to receive the newsletter and note-a-month.



CALLING ALL COOKS! Do you like to cook? Then we have a ministry for you! We would like to provide a week of meals to new moms within our church family. We are asking you only to provide one meal during that week. If you would like to

be part of this ministry, please contact Lynda at the church office (262-3016) and she will add your name to the list. If you have any questions, please contact Amanda Flikkema, Women of Hope New Mom Coordinator.

MOPS (Moms of Preschoolers) of Spencer will be hosting a Drive-Thru Pre-registration for the upcoming year on Thursday, Sept. 3rd from 8:30-11:00 a.m. in the Hope Reformed Church parking lot (next to HyVee). MOPS meets the first and third Thursday of each month from October-May from 9-11:00 a.m. at Hope Reformed Church. To learn more about the organization go to www.MOPS.org or contact Bridgette Visser at (712) 223-0892

Women of Hope: Your new Women of Hope booklet is in your mailbox. The new workgroups will begin on September 1.

The Picture Directories are in, if you had your picture taken or submitted a picture your copy of the directory is in your church mailbox.

Do you know your hymns?

Optometrist's Hymn.....Open My Eyes That I Might See
The IRS Agent's Hymn.....I Surrender All
The Gossip's Hymn.....Pass It On
The Electrician's Hymn.....Send The Light
The Shopper's Hymn.....Sweet Bye and Bye
The Massage Therapists Hymn.....He Touched Me
The Doctor's Hymn.....The Great Physician

Do you throw your printer ink cartridges away? Why not bring them to the church office and we will recycle them at Staples. We get a \$3 credit for every cartridge we bring in which helps to purchase office supplies.

Women's Retreat
Sept. 18-20
Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp
Speaker: Rev. Deb Mechler
Fee: \$79
Concert Saturday night will feature Pastor Mechler and Laura Carlentini, formerly of "Charis".
Call 712-337-3306 or go to www.okoboji.org for more information
The sessions will be on the topics of Significance, Sacramental Living & Sabbath Living.

If you would like to have a meeting (team, prayer, small group, etc.) in the church at any time please contact the church office (262-3016 or hrc@spencerhope.org) so we may put it on the church calendar to avoid confusion and interference in setting up rooms. Thank you!

Nursery Schedule: Sunday, August 30

Chris & Lori Swanson, Randy & Rhonda Lorenzen

DIVORCE CARE...A New Beginning

For those that are divorced, in the process, separated, or have ended a long term relationship. These sessions are open to the public.

Hope Reformed Church

September 8 – December 1

Tuesday evenings 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

There is no charge for the sessions.

Divorce Care: *The Courage to Heal* is a 13 week non-denominational, divorce recovery series, addressing a new topic each week.

Teen Care (Middle School & High School) will be held at the same time, but separately from the adults. Teen care will help teens understand that they are not alone and are free to express feelings through non-threatening, confidential & supportive discussion & encouragement.

Divorce Care 4 Kids (ages 5-12 years old): Kid care will help your child understand that they are not alone and are free to express feelings through stories, games, crafts and videos

Free childcare for children under age 5

Please pre-register by phoning 262-3016, 9:00-3:30, Monday – Thursday. Please inform us if you will have children Teen Care, Kids Care or childcare.

Do you like to work with children (ages 5-12 years old)? Divorce Care is in need of an adult to lead the Divorce Care 4 Kids program on Tuesday evenings Sept, 8- Dec. 1. All the material is provided. Please call Joyce Smith (262-3391) if you are interested in helping.



It's coming!

Be watching for more details!

Kid's Connection will be kicking off a great new year on Wednesday, September 23. All kid's in K-5th grade are invited to join us!



Youth News

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

will meet on Sunday evening, August 30 at 7:00 p.m.
All 9th graders are invited to come and join.

6TH, 7TH & 8TH GRADE YOUTH GROUP

will meet Wednesday, September 2, 6:30 p.m.

We teach our children to say thank-you to their grandparents for their birthday gift; why should we not teach them to say thank-you to God for the gift of their birth? Why should we not teach them that every new dawn of every morning, every drop of rain, every budding tulip, every blade of grass, every lovely thought we think, every wonderful feeling we feel, every memory of pleasure past, every tingle of pleasure present, every touch of a loved-one's finger, every hug from a laughing child, every note of a Mozart concerto, every coming home to our own place and people, every new hope that sees beyond a hard present--all of them are gifts with a person attached.

Theologian Lewis Smedes wrote in his memoirs, *My God and I* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.)

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GOOD THING I FOUND YOU GIDEON ... IT SEEMS SOMEONE HAS BEEN HIDING ALL YOUR BIBLES IN HOTEL ROOMS



Because You Asked.....

Questions about God, Life, or Anything In Between – Answered Here!

September 6 – *How Do We Hear From God?*

When people say "God told me...", are they telling the truth? How do you know God answers our prayers or if it's just our own thinking? How do you listen or look for His answers?

September 13 – *Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?*

How come God says no when we want something good to happen or we pray "God help make this person live" and we hope He says "yes" but He says "no"?

September 20 – *How Does the Old Testament Fit Into Christianity?*

If all of the Bible is true, what about the weird laws in the old testament? Is the God of the old testament the same God as the God of the new testament?

September 27 – *What Is Reformed?*

What is "Reformed?" What do we really believe and where do we come from? What is our history and what differentiates us from others (Catholics, Lutherans, Baptist, CRC, etc...)?