The Monthly Heartbeat

The Hope in Christ Church Newsletter

February 2018 Issue

Excellence or Perfection? By Pastor Scott

We often live under the assumption that we must be perfect. But before going any further, let me define perfection as we often use it. Perfection is the state of existence where nothing is wrong in our life, moral excellence has been achieved, and everything is peachy-keen. But since perfection is an unattainable goal for sinful people, we are forced into one of two responses. Either we could put on airs and pretend that we are something we are not, or we could quit trying altogether and simply let life have its way with us.

But there is another option.

What if instead of pursuing perfection, we pursued excellence?

Is excellence different than perfection? Can pursuing excellence free us from pretending to be something we are not, or from not even trying at all? I believe it can and here is why – excellence implies giving one's best, while perfection implies a finished state. My best effort today might be different than it was yesterday, and may be different tomorrow as well. But excellence allows me to give God my best efforts today in the pursuit of his plans, while acknowledging the limitations I am facing. Perfection can make me not want to try because I am influenced by memories of past attempts, or am envisioning a possible future when I might have more time, skill, or ability to offer.

Excellence makes room for improvement and doesn't imply one is complete. It allows us to yearn for more improvement in our lives than we are currently experiencing. Excellence gives us the opportunity to admit that we still need to change and grow, while perfection removes

any hint of needing to grow and change. Those pursuing perfection want to hide their imperfections, while those pursuing excellence will admit that they have weaknesses. Pursuing perfection will drain our energy because it is unattainable, but pursuing excellence can restore our souls.

Pursuing excellence allows us to do all the things God has prepared in advance for us to do with the knowledge that our hearts and motivation matters more than our flawless completion of them.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

Excellence allows us to do all things for the glory of God instead of for our own glory and self-righteous appearance. God is more interested in our heart and our willingness to attempt all that he asks of us than in our faultless completion of the tasks. He knows we can't do everything to His standard; that's why He sent Jesus.

If He wants perfection,
He need look only at Himself and Christ.
If He wants excellence,
He can look at the Spirit working in you
to form the image of Christ.

So why do we burden ourselves with a heavy load, when we could carry the light load of pursuing Christ while admitting our imperfection? My only answer – it's part of the sin nature.

In my own life, the shift from perfectionism to the pursuit of excellence has opened up a need for others. When I was trying to be perfect, I didn't need others and I didn't

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want others to really know who I was. If they knew me, my perfect persona would be shattered. They would see behind the mask. It was a lonely and tortured existence. But when God began to confront my perfection with his holiness, I quickly realized that perfection was an impossible ideal for me to achieve. God helped me to shift from pursuing perfection to pursuing excellence, and with that shift came an openness to people. But more than an openness, a real need for others grew in my life. To achieve excellence, I came to see that others could teach me, and guide me, and even see my brokenness and show me how to grow beyond it instead of hiding it. Excellence opened up the ability to receive feedback and criticism, something that my perfect persona would never have received.

I have found that honestly admitting those places that I am trying to hide from others has given me insight into my pursuit of perfection. Asking others to share their perception of me and places for growth in my life is another way my perfect persona is continually confronted. I am given the opportunity to admit my weaknesses and ask others for help in overcoming them. Pursuing excellence has allowed me to become a more forgiving and gracious person. Admitting mistakes and failures and the impossibility of operating at my peak all the time has freed me from the fictitious perfectionism that haunts my past. Now, mistakes are an opportunity to grow and learn instead of hiding and covering up.

A wise neighbor once told me that, "Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly."

That twist on the perfectionist's saying, "Anything worth doing is worth doing well," freed me to recognize that many times I avoided things because I couldn't be the best. That kept me from trying new hobbies or attempting new tasks that I wanted to experience but didn't because I didn't want to fail. This simple advice, offered on the driveway one evening, freed me to pursue excellence while admitting my current limitations.

If you try to be perfect you will never be satisfied with yourself or be honest about who you truly are. But if you seek excellence, God will be able to do more through you than you could ever ask or imagine.

Remember, God only works with imperfect beings (the perfect ones don't need him).

Family Promise Update

By Herm Laninga

Dear Hope in Christ Church Family,

Family Promise is poised to begin hosting it's first families the first week in April! That's the big news shared with us by Sarah Lane, the new Executive Director at this month's Core Leader's meeting.

Training for Volunteer Coordinators will be offered in February and the Volunteer Coordinators will, in turn, be training you, our volunteers. So now is the time to begin thinking/praying about being a volunteer in this countywide effort to address creating a safe place for homeless families with children* to stay while they seek permanent shelter.

As a support church for St. Sophia, our volunteers will assist in the following ways:

- Preparing dinners
- Being hosts during dinner
- Being overnight hosts
- Preparing breakfasts
- Funding the purchase of supplies or receiving donations such as: food staples, paper products, cleaning supplies, etc.
- Providing evening activities such as arts-and-crafts projects, video parties and possible outings for children and families.
- Coordinating donations of clothing, furniture and household items for families that find a permanent home.
- Helping to deliver donated items to a permanent home
- Setup and Takedown: A team to assist setup at the host church and takedown at the end of the week (moving beds/cots, etc.). Help with the clean-up of the Host Church facilities.
- Volunteering to help staff the Family Promise Day Center, the place parents go after breakfast with facilities of doing laundry, preparing resumes and just to relax in a quiet safe place.

In February/March we will be recruiting volunteers. In the meantime, if you have questions on how you can be involved contact anyone of us: Lorraine Brouwer and Ali and Herm Laninga.

* Without a home, children are deprived of one of the most basic resources required for healthy development. This is the saddest statistic of all – one out of every four homeless people is a child.

Heartfelt Worship By Ida Richards

"I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; before the 'gods' I will sing your praise."
Psalm 138:1a

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."

John 4:23

Our 7th Missional Marker is: **Heartfelt Worship**

It says:

- We exalt and celebrate God for who He is, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do.
- Worship reflects careful preparation to help give voice to many dimensions of response to God such as adoration, praise, contrition, lament, and commitment.
- People leave worship knowing something more about the heart of God and about their own hearts.

So, what is worship? Worship is spoken of all through the Bible. In Psalm 96:9 we read,

"Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth."

Does that just mean singing? In "The Heart of Worship from MinistryMatters.com, Jim Hawkins writes, "Worship is so integral to the life of the church that when we say we are 'going to church', what we most often mean is that we will be attending a worship service. Worship includes proclamation of God's Word, yet worship is more than Scripture lessons and a sermon. For some people, music is their favorite element of worship; yet even for music lovers worship is more than a collection of songs. We pray during worship, yet worship is more than prayer. People need to gather for worship to happen, yet worship is much more than just a meeting. Clearly worship is more than the sum of its parts." The old Webster dictionary described it this way: "worship is to honor with extravagant love and extreme submission."

Why do we worship? We worship God because he is God. Period. This extravagant love and extreme submission to the Holy One flows out of the reality that God loved us first. We desire to thank God for all He has done for us. But it must be deeper than that. We must worship Him because of Who He is – Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent. In other words, we must worship Him because He is totally worthy. But it is so right to give Him thanks – for loving us first, for choosing to walk with us, for listening and responding to us, and being in our lives.

How do we worship? John Piper, in 'Desiring God', states "We worship God authentically when we know Him truly and treasure Him duly. The word "worship" refers to that inner valuing becoming visible in the world in two basic ways. One is acts of the mouth: acts of praise and repentance in worship services or small gatherings. And the other is acts of love with the body and the hands and the feet: acts of love that show the supreme value of God by what we are willing to sacrifice for the good of others." God says this in Romans 12:1 – we're to have love for one another and rely upon God to display the worth of God above all things and thus making us worshipers in our daily life.

John Piper goes on to say "The inner essence of worship is to know God truly and then respond from the heart to that knowledge: by valuing God, treasuring God, prizing God, enjoying God, being satisfied with God above all earthly things. And then the deep, restful, joyful satisfaction in God overflows in demonstrable acts of praise from the lips and demonstrable acts of love in serving others for the sake of Christ."

Worship. It's what we do on Sunday. And then Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday

Join Us!

Hope in Christ Church has many groups that meet regularly for service and fellowship. On the back page of the Sunday bulletin, you will find a list of people who are ready to help you find the group that is just right for you. Feel free to call and speak with any of them if you are looking for a place to connect and serve!

Following are descriptions of four areas of service that might be of interest to you: Cleaning Crew, Sunday School, Worship Team, and Friendship Class.

Cleaning Crew

Retirees, do you have some "down" time on Wednesdays? You might want to consider turning it into a good time by becoming a member of the weekly volunteer cleaning crew, which is to say: the pay is out-of-thisworld!

A number of retired fellows gather at Easy/Over (next to Trader Joe's) every Wed. at 10 a.m. to enjoy chit-chat, laughs, drinks, snacks, or late breakfast. Come join us with no obligation other than to pay for your order before you leave!

A half-dozen of us then go to the church to carry-on a variety of weekly cleaning functions - mopping, dusting, window cleaning, toilet cleaning (you may have to armwrestle Joe Z. to take-over this task, but he's willing to train an assistant) vacuuming, trash disposal, chair arrangement, sidewalk sweeping, and whatever else the ladies bring to our attention!

Afterward, around noon, those that want to, go to lunch together. All-in-all, It's a great time of camaraderie. Talk to Don Recker if you'd like to do an apprenticeship. You just might have what it takes to become a regular member HICC's Cleaning Crew!

Worship Team

Has God stirred your heart with a desire to serve as part of the worship team at our church? If you have interest in singing or playing an instrument with one of our weekly teams, we'd love to find a place for you! We are especially looking for percussionists and guitarists.

If musical skill isn't your thing, maybe you have an interest in serving as part of the power point team or sound team. If you have a computer background, serving on the power point team might be a great way to help us. We also have folks willing to train interested persons on the sound board. Both of these roles are integral in helping our services flow with non-distracting excellence.

We try to coordinate a serving calendar for all worship team servants that satisfy people's desired commitment level. For interest in any of these openings, please talk with Jerry Hop or Melissa Koning (360)870-3552.

Children's Sunday School

There are four children's classes that meet on Sundays after the worship service. There is a class for 2nd & 3rd graders, 4th & 5th graders, 6th—9th graders, and "Children and Worship" for 3-5 year-olds.

"Children and Worship" teachers rotate Sundays, and Sunday School teachers have signed up for a 3 or 6-week teaching session. The sign-ups are done in the fall, when Diane looks for teachers to add to the schedule for the year.

If you'd like to visit a classroom on a Sunday morning, please contact Diane, and she will arrange for you to visit for a few minutes. The teaching experience is rewarding, enables you to get to know the kids of the church, and it's fun! As Children's Ministry Coordinator, Diane would be happy to answer any questions you might have about being involved in Sunday school.

Friendship Class

Friendship Class, a bible study for adults who have varying intellectual abilities, meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month from 7:00-8:15pm. We'd love to have you come see what this ministry is about! Feel free to stop by any night we gather.

While our evening has structure, it is also informal, so joining or leaving part way through a class would not cause a distraction. The first 45 minutes we meet altogether and you're welcome to come and sit with us. During the next 15-20 minutes, find Tanya and she'll help you locate a small group table to join. We end with a snack time in the foyer for everyone to enjoy.

Some areas this ministry could use help are:

- transportation of friends to/from class,
- planning the "special" classes such as the Easter lesson, Christmas program, service project, etc.
- substitute mentors.

There is no need to let us know you're coming to join us, but if you prefer to let us know, call or email before that Monday. For more information contact Tanya Obbink. home: 360-738-4718 email: frienship@hopeinchristchurch.org

GEMS

GEMS Girls Club meets the first and third Monday of the month, and an occasional 5th Monday. We start with Praise and Worship at 6:00 and end at 7:30 with a group prayer. From start to closing, our time is packed with lively discussions and activities to encourage and strengthen our relationship with our Creator and Savior and with one another. Visitors and volunteers are always welcome. We have 4 groups from grades 1-3, 4-6, and 7-8. Our theme is "Walking in His Steps" (1 John 2:6). There are opportunities to help with snacks, badges (such as knitting, crocheting), leading a lesson, helping with scripture memorization, leading praise and worship, or sit with us and pray for God's blessing on our time together.

Whatcom Community News

YOUTH LOOKING FOR WAYS TO SERVE: Do you have a friend or relative who needs some assistance with physical labor? High school students from Colorado, Minnesota, and Florida are coming to serve our community on June 23-29. Last year, students painted homes, repaired walls, landscaped, restored streams, and cleaned. If you or someone you know is interested or for more information, call Dan Houston at (360) 354-2936 or First CRC at (360) 354-4560.

LEARN ABOUT GLOBAL MISSIONS: Learn about the state of missions in the world today by attending "Frontier Missions In Global Perspective," a talk by Todd Johnson, one of the foremost demographers of religion in the world. The event is Feb. 17 from 9 a.m. to noon (refreshments provided) at the Ferndale Camp and Retreat Center, 5942 Portal Way. Johnson has been with Youth With A mission (YWAM) since 1978 and works with church planting to neglected peoples. For more information about the event or the host, Telos Fellowship, contact Sue Golder at (503) 431-9199 or sngolder@gmail.com.

LATEST GROUNDWORK: Whenever we're confronted with something new, we're forced to consider and re-evaluate the legitimacy of what we know. Join Groundwork as we study Acts 15 to see how God works to create growth as the early church believers discern their way through controversy. Listen now at GroundworkOnline.com and subscribe to Groundwork's weekly e-mails for future episodes.

JUSTICE BIBLE STUDY: Calvin College is offering a seven-week Bible study on the theme of justice beginning Thursday, Feb. 1. Seven different writers from Calvin and the wider church community have addressed such topics as race, pro-life, creation care, and poverty from a biblical perspective. All studies are available for download (pdf) at www.calvin.edu/faith.

VOLUNTEER OVERSEAS: World Renew's Global Volunteer Program provides opportunities for 18- to 24-year-olds to embark on short-term volunteer opportunities with life-long impact. Live, work, eat, and play in an international community while exploring how God wants you to use your talents and skills for His purpose. For more information, contact Andrew at globalvolunteer@worldrenew.net.

ISRAEL & JORDAN STUDY TOUR: Visit New Testament sites in Israel (Bethlehem, Nazareth, Caesarea, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Sea of Galilee, Caesarea Philippi, and Jerusalem), and Jordan, including the amazing city of Petra, on May 17-29. Contact host Jeff Weima, professor of New Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary and leading biblical scholar, at weimje@calvinseminary.edu or (616) 328-3110.

Northwest Hispanic Ministry Report for January 2017

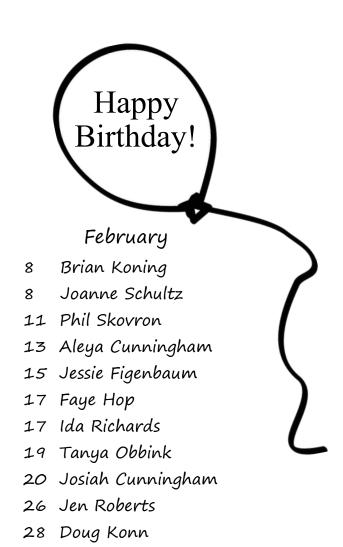
By Joe Strong

As the church gathered at the end of 2017, I had asked the members to share a verse and say a few words. We heard some very powerful testimonies from people who seldom say a word. One woman who has had a very difficult marriage says that those difficulties had been instrumental in her developing a deep relationship with Jesus. Another woman said in this past year that our church has taught her to love others more deeply. I thought, "Wow! This is one of the greatest compliments a church could ever receive!"

Rosa told me that she was getting a divorce. She no longer could live with her husband who was drinking too much and had a wandering eye. She asked me if I knew any lawyers that could help her. I asked if I could come to the house when both she and her husband were home before doing anything. I had been there many times before. I spent a lot of time praying that God would help me. Before coming to their house, I found on the internet an article of ten things that happen to children of divorce (they have 3). I read that to this couple while sitting in their living room. The husband reacted with bravado and sort of blew everything off. I learned later that that night this man started to cry. He cried and cried for several days. The divorce was put on hold. This fall, the two of them went to a three-day Christian marriage seminar and found it very helpful. Today, there is no talk of divorce. They are doing so much better. Thank you, Jesus. Pray for these two.

Jose Antonio must be about 42 or 43 years old and has been locked up for a few months. He was so lonely when I first met him because he was in a pod of the Whatcom County Jail with men who only spoke English. I spoke with Jose and gave him a Bible and the book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, in Spanish. The next week, I noticed a small change in the man. The following week, he had experienced the change of a new life in Jesus. He has become such a light. Just before Christmas, he insisted that I go to his house in Bellingham and give his wife, his brother-in-law, and his daughter the book. Now they are reading this and when they get together, they talk about Jesus. Pray for Jose and his family.

I thank God for those who reached out and made the holidays special for some poorer people in the Hispanic community. Thank you for your support. This past year was a year of many blessings. This ministry is touching hundreds of lives.



Giving in December 2017

Designated Fund Offerings:	Dec \$ 2,922	Year-to-Date \$ 2,922
General Fund Offerings Rent / Utilities Income Total Undesignated Income General Fund Expenses Income Over(Under) Expenses	\$21,960 <u>2,562</u> 24,522 (17,835) \$ 6,687	\$ 21,960 <u>2,562</u> 24,522 (17,835) \$ 6,687
Total 2018 budget, including min Year-to-Date Budget for 1 month Total Undesignated Income Income Over (Under) Budget		\$ 224,758 \$ 18,730 <u>24,522</u> \$ 5,762

Loan Balances: Classis: \$ 17,500

Deacon's Digest

By Rockelle Ruiter

We praise God for his faithfulness in providing for all our needs through the faithful giving of His people this past year! In addition to the generous donations which made the renovation of our office and educational space possible and which helped bring two more of God's precious children into our church family through adoption, we ended the year with our financial statement in the black! We pray that as God calls us to sacrificial giving, we respond generously with joyful hearts.

Mark your calendar for the Hymn Sing scheduled for February 18 at 6 p.m. Bring your favorite hymn requests and an appetite for pie, which will be served following. If you would like to donate a pie or two, please contact one of the deacons, or look for a sign-up sheet at the Information

Center in the foyer.

Items of Interest from January's Council Meeting

By Joe Pruitt

Members Present: Joe Pruitt, Rockelle Ruiter, Avis Kaemingk, Michael Boer, Terry Vander Woude, Don Recker, Lou Kooistra, Lisa DeSalvo, Jerry Hop

The Story Bible Study: We are off to a good start, and hope that good attendance and participation continues during adult Sunday school.

Strategic Planning Ministry (Vitality) Team: The next meeting will be held on January 24th.

Church Information Packets: The possibility of putting together Hope in Christ Church activity information (ministries, small groups, etc.) to place in the foyer was discussed.

Book study: Council is continuing to discuss the study, "Effective Leadership in the Church - Sustaining Pastoral Excellence in the Christian Reformed Church."

Portable Area: Council will decide the best option for covering the hole that was left when the portable building was removed.

New Members: Consideration was given to having new members acknowledged during a church service, in the Heartbeat, or another method. They might provide bio information, personal testimony, or whatever is on their heart to share.

Prayer Requests: Ways to facilitate prayer requests after normal church business hours were discussed.

Preaching Series		Offering Schedule			
2/4	New Commands and a New Covenant	2/4	General Fund		
2/11	The Story, Chapter 5 (Exodus) Complaining Won't Get You Anywhere	2/11	General Fund		
2/11	The Story, Chapter 6 (Num., Deut.)	2/18	Outreach Fund		
2/18	Walk by Faith	2/25	General Fund		
2/25	The Story, Chapter 7 (Joshua) God's Punishment and His Mercy The Story, Chapter 8 (Judges)	Ushering Schedule			
Greeters Schedule		2/4	Don Knutson, Len Vander Woude		
		2/11	Lou Kooistra, Ken Wick		
2/4	Don & Tena Vanderpol	2/18	Helen Bowman, Bud Brouwer		
2/11	Joe Pruitt, Helen Bowman	2/25	Deloris Perry, Elaine Snapper		
2/18	Don & Elaine Snapper	Child	Children & Worship		
2/25	Ruth Stadt, Lisa Oppenhuizen		•		
Cookie Schedule		2/4	Dan Obbink, Amber		
2/4	Megan Speyer, Ruth Stadt	2/11	Diane Button, Kylie		
2/11		2/18	Bekah Roberts, Ali Laninga		
	Christine Speyer, Donna Van Beek	2/25	Dan Obbink, Mattea		
2/18	Terry Vander Woude, Tena Vanderpol	Sund	Sunday School Schedule		
2/25	Barb Zylstra, Jenn Boer	2/4	Ida Richards, Tena Vanderpol		
Serving Assistants		2/11	Ida Richards, Tena Vanderpol		
2/4	Clara, Abee, Amber	2/18	Diane Button, Darlys Recker		
2/11	Micah, Caleb, Mattea	2/25	Diane Button, Darlys Recker		
2/18	Chantel, Maggie, Michal	_,			
2/25	Kylie, Zeke, Micah				
Praye	r Room	*****	*************************		
2/4	Ali Laninga	Not Able to Serve When			
2/11	Lorraine Brouwer	Scheduled?			

2/18

2/25

Lou Kooistra

Ida Richards

Please call someone on the list and make a plan to trade dates.
Thank you for your help!

February 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				6:30 AM Men's Group 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study, Praise Team	2	3
4 9:30 Worship &Communion 11:00 Sunday School 6:00 PM TAG	5 6:00 PM GEMS	6	7 9:45 Women's Bible Study 7:00 PM Elders Deacons	6:30 AM Men's Group 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study, Praise Team	9	10
11 9:30 Worship 11:00 Sunday School 4:30 PM Jesus Gathering 4:30 PM	7:00 PM Friendship Class	6:30 PM Boer's Bible Study	9:45 Women's Bible Study 7:00 PM Council	6:30 AM Men's Group 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study, Praise Team	16	17
9:30 Worship 11:00 Sunday School 6:00 PM Hymn Sing	19 6:00 PM GEMS	20	9:45 Women's Bible Study Heartbeat Newsletter Deadline	6:30 AM Men's Group 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study,	23	24
25 9:30 Worship 11:00 Sunday School 4:30 PM Roberts Group	26 7:00 PM Friendship Class	27 6:30 PM Boer's Bible Study	28 9:45 Women's Bible Study 7:00 PM Worship Planning Team	Praise Team		