

# Heartbeat



Hope In Christ Church  
710 East Sunset  
Bellingham, WA  
98225  
360-733-6177

## Meals Together Build Community

By Pastor Scott Roberts

The first week we attended church in Bozeman, MT as newlyweds, we were invited to supper with 3 different families. Those invitations continued to be extended and accepted for months as Jen and I were settling into a new community, starting a new life together, and trying to figure out what it meant to leave college and begin life as working professionals. The meals to which we were invited developed friendships and a sense that we belonged to that church and were being welcomed into it. It was a sign of true community; welcoming people, spending time with them in one's home, asking questions, and sharing life. The 5 months we lived in Bozeman were wonderful months and they solidified in our minds that community-building involves hospitality.

Hospitality is so much more than simply a meal invitation, or a time for tea, but it certainly involves these things. There is something about food that is shared



together that makes for an inviting and more relaxed time. It is why businesspeople do lunches. It is why fundraising events frequently involve meals or desserts. Food bonds people and opens conversation and sharing in a way that standing

around doesn't. The same was true in Jesus' day. He was lamented by the religious people for eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners. His first miracle at Cana was part of a marriage feast. The closing pages of Scripture hold out to the

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## Meals Together Build Community

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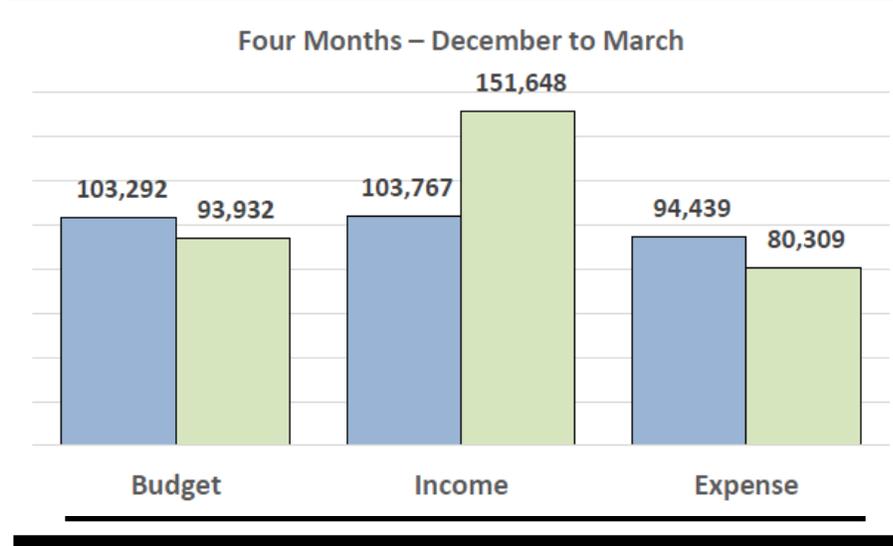
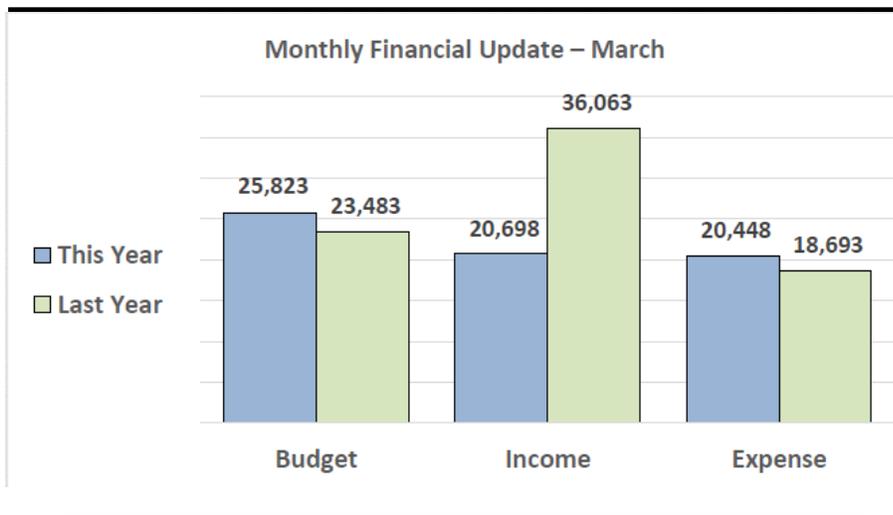
people of God a picture of a banquet to which the righteous will eat with their Savior. It doesn't matter where one looks in Scripture, food is frequently present, and food plays a major part in building communal life. That is one of the reasons why the book of Acts records the blanket vision of Peter in which all kinds of things are present, and Peter is told to kill and eat (Acts 10:9ff). Without being willing to eat together, the Jew and the Gentile would never be able to become the body of Christ and the lost would never hear the good news of Jesus. Meals build bridges inside and outside the church. Meals make fellowship and community possible. Meals aid in sharing our faith with those who don't know Jesus yet.

If meals together are such an important thing for building a community, then what steps can those who attend Hope in Christ Church take to strengthen and expand the Community of Christ? There are a few things. First, we must open our eyes beyond those whom we already fellowship with and see those who are new in our midst, or at least new to us. Invite them over to a meal, dessert, or to have coffee or tea. Try to make it a habit of inviting over or getting together with someone new to you a few times a month. This will expand your community and extend the warm welcome we are known to give to people.

Secondly, make it a habit of inviting one of your neighbors over each month who doesn't know Jesus yet. Get to know them, share life together. Take a genuine interest in their life. You may be surprised at how easy it is to share the faith when you have a genuine relationship. Don't be discouraged if your invitations are rejected. Keep on asking those in your neighborhood until you get a yes. Spend the week before you invite someone praying for God to work in their heart - to accept and prepare the way in advance.

Thirdly, don't assume that the meal must be fancy, or the house has to be spotless. People are interested in the real you, not the fabrication we put on when we try to perfect things. We are normal people, living in normal houses that have normal problems keeping up with it all. A warm welcome goes a long way. The chances are that you will be more concerned about the mess than your guest. I don't know how many times people have commented that they are relieved to see that they aren't the only ones who live in a mess. But I have never been commented upon how clean my home is. So relax, have a meal with someone new once or twice a month, and genuinely get to know those newer people, giving them the gift of yourself. That is how true community is built.





## HCC MARCH Giving



## Community News

**BANNER FOR FREE:** The Banner, the magazine of the Christian Reformed Church, is free. Sign up for free print delivery and a weekly e-newsletter by visiting the-banner.org/signup. Given the Award of Excellence (2020) for best denominational magazine by the Evangelical Press Association, The Banner offers CRC news; thoughtful articles; and reviews of books, movies, and music.

**MOMS OF HOPE:** A child should look into their mother’s eyes and see hope for the future. But too many children around the world see fear—the fear that comes with food insecurity. Next week, through your gift to World Renew’s Free A Family® program, you can help provide women in vulnerable communities with training in income-generating activities, proper health and nutrition practices, and more, so they are equipped to become Moms of Hope. Please share Christ’s hope. To learn more, go to worldrenew.net/momsofhope

**PAUL’S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS IN GREECE:** Travel by motor coach (eight days) and cruise ship (three days) to sites connected with Paul’s second and third missionary journeys as well as visit other major sites of biblical, archaeological, and cultural interest. Jeff Weima, professor at Calvin Theological Seminary and leading Pauline scholar, hosts this inspirational tour from Oct. 6 to 18. For more information, contact Weima at (616) 328-3110 or weimje@calvinseminary.edu.

# GOODNESS

## IN THE FACE OF EVIL

### Part 2

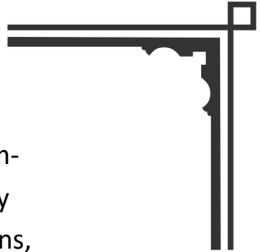
By  
Pastor Ethan  
Rogers

When last we discussed how Christians must respond to evil done them, we spent the majority of our time identifying what Christians ought not do, namely that they are forbidden to repay evil in evil. However, what we did not address is what Christians ought to do, and as Paul does not neglect to address this half of the ethical paradigm, neither then should we. To that end, examine with me if you will Romans 12:20-21,

***To the contrary, 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink;  
for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head'  
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.***

These lines arrive fast on the heels of a command forbidding us to enact vengeance on another; now we are commanded, not only to squelch our desire to revenge ourselves, but also to repay villainy done us with kindness. This is not a passive sort of kindness (there is no “best thoughts and well wishes” described here), but the meeting of tangible need, the filling of bellies, the warming of hands, the clothing of shoulders. We are not given a manner in which to keep kindness reticent, for kindness, if it is to be known as such, must be blatant. After all, is not an unmet need blatant? Does not a rumbling belly or a dry throat wear away at the conscious mind? Does not the drip of sweat or the chatter of teeth sear into the mind an awareness of the hot and cold? Do not wretchedness and misery make themselves known in every glare and grumble? The silencing of a need is unmistakable, and none who receive what they are truly and desperately in need of remain unaware of the blessing which accomplished the silencing.

Keep your eyes open and your ears inclined to know your enemy’s need; seek to help both when help is scarce and plentiful, when the need is great and small. Why? “... by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” There is nothing quite so appallingly pungent to self-assuredness like the defiance of expectation. By choosing to respond to the world with kindness, we deny them the satisfaction of certainty; we defy their worldview. Yet, we are not to do this merely, and certainly not primarily, because we derive some absurd and sick



pleasure from defying norms and moors (after all, if we lived in a largely kind culture, our command to be kind would not therefore become a command to be cruel); rather, we are to do this because it shames them. Why would Christians be tasked to shame unbelievers? For a number of reasons, but chiefly because it opens the door to Christ. Before I continue, a brief word on this 'shaming' I speak of; we are not to be temperamental and aggressive sorts, nor are we to be as dog-owners rubbing a disobedient hound's nose in a yellowed sitting-room rug, nor still are we to be scorners, mockers, or jeerers. We do not delight in the shaming of others. The only cause we have to celebrate shame is when it drives someone to the feet of Christ, and so comes to be at play in their salvation. Let our eyes therefore be not on the shame, but on the kindness which we are, whether it succeeds or fails in wooing others to Christ, obliged to exercise.

With that said, it is important to note that the help we give others (that meeting of needs we spoke of earlier) does not always have to be grand. A shared meal is not grand, but it meets a need. The building of a house is grand, and still it meets a need. They are both, in equal measure, acts of kindness, and therefore heap an equal amount of burning coal; it is not the grandness or meagerness of the help which communicates Christ in us, but the presence of kindness when harshness should long have choked it out. No one in the world has the advantage of Christ's clear example of love and sacrifice; they do not yet know the depths of a love which soldiers on when it is beaten, betrayed, broken. But we, now that we are Christians, do. We see the majesty of God more clearly than all the rest of the world, for we have glimpsed more greatly His love, His mercy, His kindness. And we are therefore carriers of a great burden in our commission to bear His likeness before all others. It is when we love in spite of the world's hate that the image of Christ is most clearly conveyed, when the opportunity for shame (the same shame we ourselves felt in going to His feet!) is greatest. The sincerest hate the world may unleash upon the believer coerces the most imposing shame when it is met, in turn, by even the most mild of Christian kindnesses. So as you go about this month, do not be tempted by vengeance, but keep your eyes fixed on remaining kind in spite of ills done you. It is a tool for our evangelism, a responsibility given us by the Apostle, and, most importantly, it is what our Lord has done for us. After all, *"it is... the persecuted or martyred Christian in whom the pattern of the Master is most unambiguously realized"* (C.S. Lewis).



# Council Update

By Clair Abee

Hope in Christ formal leadership includes the 5 elders and the Pastor/Teaching elder. Additionally, we have the 5 deacons who work together with an assigned elder. These teams meet individually and together (council). We divided the church members into 5 member districts by alphabet. Pastor Scott is responsible for all the elder and deacon families. These “oversite” districts are noted at the back page of the weekly program so feel free to contact us for prayers and praises.

Meetings follow a basic guideline of topics for discussion and the challenge to keep us all focused on Glorifying God by Knowing, Living and Proclaiming our Hope in Christ. Both the elders and deacons have a time for prayer for members, ministries and activities. Additionally, each team has “study materials” and meeting devotions. The work includes understanding/encouraging per topics such as: Pastor’s activity report, Associate Pastors activity report, Elder activity report, Deacon/Treasurer activity report, Worship Planning Team update, Hospitality update, Building and Grounds/maintenance report, & Vitality Team inputs.

Currently, the council and Vitality team are reworking the PULSE congregational survey of 5 years ago which helps us monitor our “church health” signs from a range of At Risk...to Stable...to Healthy/Missional. The discussions and considerations are based on various measurable criteria such as member’s commitment to participating in small groups, in-person worship and Sunday school participation, prayer life and spiritual growth, community life building activities, etc. With the fact that the review was last done over 5 years ago, interruption of COVID to “regular activities”, the welcomed growth in new members, the addition of youth and singles ministry pastor Ethan, and the benefits that come from a general body health check, Council is hoping everyone will take this opportunity to think with the Mind of Christ about ourselves. We seek (Ephesians 2:10) to be on the path Christ has prepared in advance for us, and equipped and gifted us for, so we can glorify our God and Father.

Council is thankful for those who have allowed their name and time to be put up for 3 years of council service. We are looking forward to the process of retiring and replacing 2 elders and 2 deacons in May. This is another way to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and keep the council on a healthy church and missional mindset. Continue to lift up your leaders in prayer and with encouragements. Thank you for your faithfulness and blessings.



## G.E.M.S.

### BAKED POTATO & BUNKO NIGHT

Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6 p.m.

Menu: Baked potatoes with all the trimmings, chili, salad, and dessert  
**Plus Bunko!**

**Invite your neighbors and friends for an evening  
of fun and fellowship**

**You may even win a prize!**

# The Delay of Unanswered Prayers



*I called him, but he gave no answer.*

Song of Songs 5:6

Prayer sometimes lingers, like a petitioner at the gate, until the King comes with the blessings that she seeks. The Lord, when He has given great faith, has been known to test it by long delays. He has allowed His servants' voices to echo in their ears as if the heavens were brass. They have knocked at the golden gate, but it has remained immovable, as though it were rusted upon its hinges. Like Jeremiah, they have cried, "You have wrapped yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through" Lam. 3:44.

In this manner true saints have continued to wait patiently without a reply, not because their prayers were not strong, nor because they were unaccepted, but because it so pleased Him who is a Sovereign and who gives according to His own pleasure. If it pleases Him to test our patience, shall He not do as He wishes with His children? Beggars must not be choosers either as to time, place, or form.

But we must be careful not to take delays in prayer for denials. God's postdated checks will be punctually honored; we must not allow Satan to shake our confidence in the God of truth by pointing to our unanswered prayers. Unanswered petitions are not unheard. God keeps a file for our prayers—they are not blown away by the wind; they are treasured in the King's archives. This is a registry in the court of heaven in which every prayer is recorded.

Struggling believer, your Lord has as it were a tear-bottle in which the costly drops of your sacred grief are put away, and a book in which your holy groanings are numbered. By-and-by your case shall prevail. Can you not be content to wait a little? Will the Lord's time not be better than yours? By-and-by He will comfortably appear, to your soul's joy, and will cause you to put away the sackcloth and ashes of long waiting and put on the scarlet and fine linen of full fruition.

Devotional material is taken from *Morning and Evening*, written by C. H. Spurgeon, revised and updated by Alistair Begg. Copyright © 2003, Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187. Used by permission of Crossway, [www.crossway.org](http://www.crossway.org).



# MAY 2022



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 a.m. Worship & Communion 10:30 a.m. Congregational Meeting 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	2 GEMS	3 12:15 p.m. Lunchtime Zoom Prayer 6:30 p.m. Boer Bible Study	4 HCC Day2Pray 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study 11:45 a.m. Elders Meeting	5 National Day of Prayer 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Deacons	6	7
8 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 5:00 p.m. Jesus Gathering 6:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m. Youth Event at Parsonage 7:00 p.m. Kaemingk Bible Study	9 6:00 p.m. Friendship Bible Study Pizza & Potluck	10 12:15 p.m. Lunchtime Zoom Prayer	11 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study	12 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Council Meeting	13 6:00 p.m. GEMS NIGHT Bunko & Baked Potatoes	14
15 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	16 GEMS	17 12:15 p.m. Lunchtime Zoom Prayer 6:30 p.m. Boer Bible Study	18 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study	19 6:30 a.m. Men's Group	20 June Heartbeat Articles Due	21
22 9:30 a.m. Worship, Ordination of New Elders and Deacons 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 7:00 p.m. Kaemingk Bible Study 6:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m. Youth Event	23	24 12:15 p.m. Lunchtime Zoom Prayer	25 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Worship Planning Team	26 6:30 a.m. Men's Group	27	28
29 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	30	31 12:15 p.m. Lunchtime Zoom Prayer	<h1>Happy Birthday !</h1> 			

- 1 Rachel C
- 1 David R
- 3 Sarah M
- 6 Junior J

- 9 Elaine S
- 18 Peter S
- 24 Connie K
- 28 Michael K