



hope

Anchored in Service

Quarterly Topic from Hope Lutheran Church

May—July 2019

In our quarterly desire to dive deeper into matters of faith and life, providing a more extended exploration of the aspects of living the abundant life, we have zeroed our attention this issue on the servant nature of the follower of Christ. We hope to provide some insight and fodder and spur reflection and discussion for members of Hope as we await the greeting “well done, good and faithful servant!”

well done, good and faithful servant

Five hundred years ago the Western Christian Church was mired in a never ending death spiral of emphasis on works righteousness. The original intent was no doubt noble but as with all things human, the vicarious atonement of Jesus for the sins of all became blotted out by meaningless rites and rituals, monastic vows, indulgences, prayers to the saints, indulgences, and all sorts of other means to placate an angry God. They would all eventually fail because of the focus on human effort and not on the undeserved grace of a loving Father. We can humbly find pride in the monk Martin Luther who “rediscovered” the basic truth that the just shall live by faith! Because of that historic, ingrained perspective of avoiding works righteousness, many in our tradition have an aversion to embracing a robust understanding of the practice of faith in service. We don’t want to be seen as those advocating only “the Shalts and Shalt Nots.” We know where that led and can easily lead today. But remember, it’s not faith *or* works, not faith *and* works but faith *that* works (cf. the declaration of the brother of Jesus in James 2:17)!

Nevertheless, an appreciation and implementation of the whole council of God involves service, a living out of the faith in the heart by the works of the hands and the words of the mouth... for the neighbor. Listen to the words of Jesus in Mark 10 *“For the Son of man himself came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* No matter how tired and stretched, the Savior engaged the lost and the unclean, healed their diseases, raised their dead, fed their 5,000 in order to proclaim a day of the Lord’s favor in deeds of service. He served the least of his society, to say nothing of his greatest service when he embodied his own words, “No greater love has any man than to lay down his life for his friends.” His ultimate act of service ended at the cross by the substitution of his sinless life for the sin-filled lives of all mankind! Praise be to God, sacrifice accepted!

It is also telling that in the infant Church the second office established after that of apostle was the diaconate or the office of service. Remember Stephen, the first martyr, and the other six appointed to distribute food to widows while the apostles attended to prayer and the Word in Acts 6?

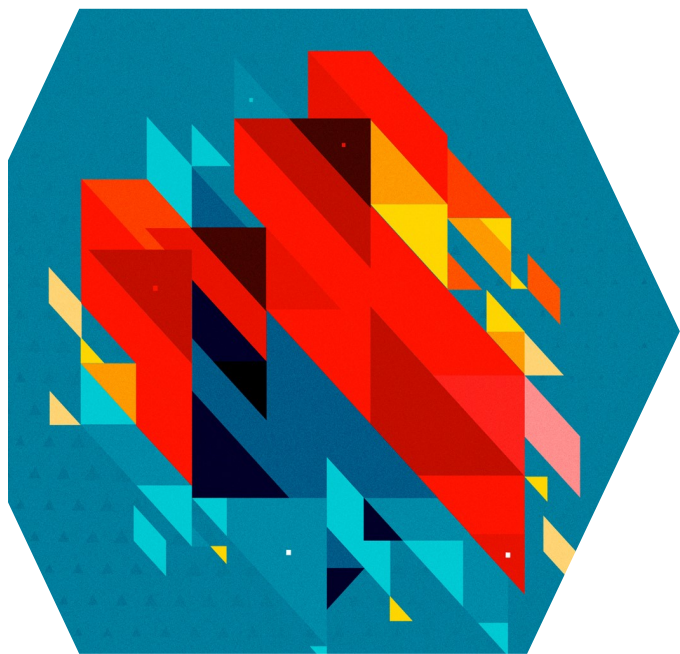
But why this emphasis today? In my dealings with so many Christians there seems to be an attitude of nonchalance about service just as long as they have the proper doctrinal statements in tact. This by no means negating the importance of Scriptural truth, but when it stops there, we handicap and demoralize Christian living. For it is in living out the faith in daily give and take that the wonders of God's grace become evident, where faith shows its mettle, where the neighbor is served. If we consider the division of the Decalogue, seventy per cent directs interaction with my neighbor. The way God serves my neighbor, whom he loves, is through me! Any missionary will flat out tell you that those targeted for the Word of God will not care one wit until they understand how much the missionary cares for them, i.e. service validates the message. Proclamation of the Gospel good news begins in service! One of the telling complaints the Nones (those who check None on the religious preference survey) have against the Body of Christ is the hypocrisy displayed in words and no action on behalf of those that Jesus would have served. We talk a good game.

In the afterglow of the Resurrection of Jesus, ask this question: What are we to do with an endless supply of life? He earned it for us, freely gave it to us and now what? Like the oil and meal of the widow of Zarephath, (1 Kings 17) our life never runs out so that we can give it all away everyday in service. As an aside, this emphasis moved us to reformat our July worship with Word, Sacrament **and** service!

It is my prayer and hope that we live out faith in little and big ways in service to family and friends, co-workers and acquaintances, strangers and of course the neighbor...the one in need whom Jesus loves.

— *Pastor Ralph*





I am quite honored to serve at Hope Lutheran with many enthusiastic music volunteers. With a rich music program, it is always good to remember what the goals are for our music ministry and also to point out the benefits of this kind of service both to the participants and the listeners.

Our worship at Hope is liturgical. Much of our music is liturgical music. This word can mean several different things. At the moment, I am using it to refer to the sacramental and sacrificial nature of our worship. The sacraments are ways that God comes to us with His Word and sometimes with outward elements (water, bread and wine). Besides Holy Communion and (occasionally Baptism) our worship

includes the reading of God's Word. These are the sacramental aspects. Our worship also includes prayers, confession of sin and proclamation of our faith in creeds. These elements are primarily sacrificial because they are the ways we respond to God. Music often surrounds and is even enmeshed with these words and actions. This kind of music is so different from music that is performed by performers and listened to by an audience. That music is great and has its place. It is one of God's gifts. It can even be sacred in content. And, there are times when most of us passively listen (much like an audience) to music that is part of our worship. However, liturgical music is different. One way liturgical music is different is that it often involves actions in which we all participate. We are not meant to *listen* to prayers, we *pray* them. We don't *listen* to a confession of sins, we *confess* our own sins. We don't *listen* to creeds, we *confess* creeds. And when we sing, we sing not just to be heard or have fun. We sing to express our own belief, and to communicate with God and one another.

The goal of the liturgical musician is not primarily to perform for people. One goal is to add beauty and expressiveness to the sacramental parts of the service. Another goal is to assist people in their response to God through prayers, acts of worship, statements of faith and words of encouragement to each other. There may also be teaching elements. Sometimes hymns and songs contain these elements of worship within themselves even if they are not labeled as such.

While our participating musicians must practice, build skills and use them to create expressive and beautiful sounds, our goal is not just the music itself but what can happen through the music. I'll try to illustrate with a non-musical example. A brick layer can use his craft to build a solid wall. He can also use those skills and artistry to create a beautiful church building. While a beautiful church building can be appreciated by many people, the ultimate goal of the church building is not only to be a thing of art and aesthetic beauty (though it may be). The goal of the church building is to be a beautiful place *in* which worship takes place.

So while liturgical music may attain beauty and expressiveness and demonstrate the skills of the musicians. All of this is not an end in itself, but primarily a means to the end of enriching the worship of

those present. We can thank God for the people who service by enriching our worship with music. We can also thank God for people like the Altar Guild who also put in hours of preparation so that many aspects are enriched. There are also sound technicians, ushers, acolytes who also serve to make sure various worship elements are properly prepared and executed. As a church musician I know that our singers and players put in hours of preparation so that our worship can be what it is. As someone who is in the church building quite a bit I am also encouraged as I see many of these other servants who spring into action before, during and after our worship services to take care of so many details and tasks.

So I do thank God for the opportunity to facilitate people serving the Lord in our music ministry. While this is our highest goal, I also see many benefits to those serving. Our music groups are not a complete replacement for other small groups, Bible studies and those kinds of things, but they sometimes fulfill the same functions of fellowship, education and spiritual enrichment. At our rehearsals we do get to know one another. We share our joys and challenges and sometimes a prayer. In the process of making music, we sometimes learn about the structures and functions of our worship. We also learn spiritual truths. While the congregation may sing a hymn just once on a given Sunday, the choir may sing those words 5-10 times in rehearsal. These sacred texts and scriptural truths can then more fully do their work on our hearts. When you think about how many hours a week we hear messages from a worldly point of view and then compare that to the spiritual messages we receive in a single 65-75 minute worship service per week, there can be a hefty imbalance. Participating in music making at church can be a positive spiritual benefit for the participants, adding more minutes of uplifting and positive messages every week.

Music making itself is known to bring physical and psychological benefits. People who sing together find their breathing and heartbeats become regulated and synchronized (that is a good thing). Studies have shown that singing in a choir can reduce depression, boost oxytocin and reduce anxiety. Group musical activities can build a feeling of togetherness and unity among the participants. Music making is said to be brain-healthy as it is one of the few activities which engages both hemispheres of the brain.

So, participation in service through music can be a blessing to others as well as ourselves. Not everyone has the same gifts or abilities. Yet, with a little effort, sometimes many people working together can combine their basic abilities and create some very fine music. Some develop some skills while in school and can revive those abilities later in life. Others may take up music later and find that it is a satisfying hobby and something that can be used to benefit others. As the music director here I see one of my roles to be finding out what talents people have (large, small and in between) and finding opportunities for them to use those talents in whatever time frame can work for them. So please to let me know where I can plug you in for serving the Lord through music here at Hope.



— Michael Kesar

Tithe your time.

I heard Pastor Ralph say this in a new member class years ago. I told him I was going to use that phrase one day, and I'm pretty sure he gave me permission.

So many activities happen on Hope's campus

solely because of the volunteers who make them happen. Vacation Bible School (VBS) is right around the corner, and it is, with the exception of Hope's staff, a completely volunteer run undertaking. We generally welcome around 200 children to our campus for the week of VBS, and the majority of those children are not Hope members. The next largest volunteer run activity here on campus that I am involved with would be Upward Basketball and Cheerleading. This is a three-month activity that also welcomes about 200 children, and their families, to Hope's campus. I am beyond grateful to the people who choose to tithe their time and make those activities happen, and if I may say, happen well.

Giving your time to serve others can be tricky.

We are all very busy with activities involving our families, our jobs, and maybe even our hobbies. Volunteering for something new might be stepping outside of our comfort zone with the unknowns of how will this all work, what will my responsibilities be, how much time will I really have to commit, and we may not really ever see any "fruits" from our volunteering labors. Chances are however, if we take that first step, we find an area where we can comfortably and even happily "tithe our time" and make a difference. What a great example to set for our children by being the hands and feet of Jesus. Beyond setting the example, what if we happen to find a place to serve where we can include our children and teach them to serve as well.

Pastor Jon recently spoke in a sermon about telling others about Jesus. If we do not continue to share the good news of Jesus' life and death, eventually no one will be telling that good news. We are responsible for making sure the story of our salvation is passed along to the next generation. I think the same can be said about the spirit of service to

others expecting nothing in return. If our children do not see us giving of ourselves in service to others, there is a good chance that they will not tithe their time when they are out on their own. Living out our faith through volunteering sets the example and plants the seed telling our children that this is important.

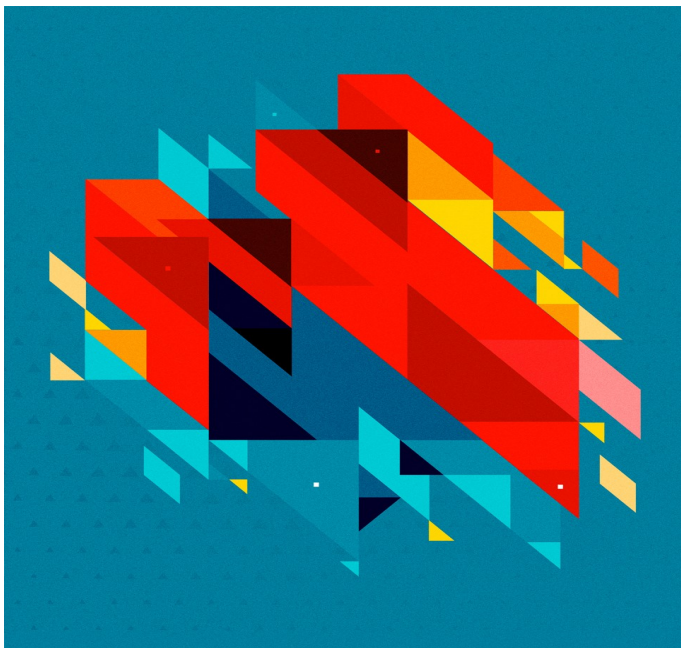
This summer, we will continue our pattern of using July as a month to come together as a faith family to build relationships through service. I would encourage you to find a project on at least one of those July Sundays to work together as a family. Then, follow-up over the next several days with brief chats at home or in the car about the project your family worked on – what did everyone like about it, not like about it, how did everyone think it would benefit those for whom the project was done, would you change anything about the project - just about any question you can think of to generate conversation. Next, look for ways to be in service to others even once our July Sundays of service are complete. I promise you, Hope is brimming with more opportunities than you may realize. Just take a tiny step outside your comfort zone, and you might find a brand new place to teach your children how rewarding “tithing your time” can be. What a wonderful way to share the good news with others; not just by telling, but by doing.

— *Krista Beken*

**"God has given each of you a gift
from his great variety of spiritual
gifts. Use them well to serve one
another."**

Peter 4:10 (NLT)





“What can I do for you God? How can I serve you?” Have you ever asked these questions? What did you do about it? Did you try to find something you can do for God? What was it? How did it go? Did you keep your promise? Or did “How can I serve you God” turn into “Not today God. I’ll do it tomorrow.” Problem is, we so often try to serve God so that we can feel better about ourselves or to try to make up for something we feel guilty or ashamed of. And every time, in some way, we fail. Look at the Apostle Peter. This same Peter who boldly claimed he was ready to die defending his Lord, denies him that very night three times. If Saint Peter failed, how will we not fail?

But our God has done something remarkable – unheard of among all the faiths of the world: God came to us, to serve us. Jesus said, “For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and give to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) This same Jesus served

those who call Him Lord and Master by washing their feet. This same Jesus died as the least – a servant of all – as He died with the sin of all and then rose from the dead. Jesus has revealed that our God, remarkably, comes to serve us. Nearly at the end of the Gospel

according to John (21:1-14), some of the disciples decided to go back to what they used to do – fishing. They go out and catch nothing. But in the morning, Jesus is waiting there on the beach. He tells them to try again, and they bring in a huge catch. Not only that, Jesus has breakfast ready for them on shore! He once again shows His disciples that He is the God who serves.

What about us today? Do we come to worship because we want to serve God? Or to be served by God? Dr. Nagel of Concordia Seminary wrote in the introduction to our LSB Hymnal, “Our Lord is the Lord who serves.” He serves us by forgiving us. He serves us by

speaking His Word to us. He serves us by forgiving and strengthening us in the Sacrament.

After they caught the fish, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” three times and Peter saying with greater emotion each “Yes, Lord I love you!” Jesus’ answer: “Feed my sheep.” Peter’s pride and weakness and failure is forgiven and he is restored for service. When we look at our pride and weakness and failure – we can’t help but come to the conclusion that we are unworthy. Yet Just like Peter, you’re forgiven in Jesus! And you’ve been restored for service. Not to justify yourself, not to prove yourself before God that you are worthy. No, your service to others flows from our Lord’s service to you. You are freed to serve in worship with sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving in songs and hymns, sacrifices of offerings and prayers for others. You are freed to serve one another and your neighbor out there – not out of guilt or to earn favor – but out of love. Because you have been served, therefore, you can serve.

We will have a lot of opportunities this summer to serve. Lots of opportunities to make a difference in people’s lives. What an amazing privilege and responsibility we have! So, serve because your Lord has already served you beyond what you can imagine. Serve out of love for your neighbor. Serve, and the ones you do serve will experience the love of God in Jesus through you.

— Pastor Jon

How
can I
serve?

Vacation Bible School

June 24 - 29, 2019

9:00 AM - Noon

\$15.00 per child

Ages 4 - Finished 5th Grade

Registration is going on now through June 5



Volunteers are needed for VBS. Sign-up sheets are in the Grand Hallway or the church office.

Summer Intergenerational Bible Study

During the month of June we will be engaging in our popular Intergenerational Bible Study Series. Those 6th grade through the most senior among us are invited to gather together around tables in the Great Room for study, discussion, and learning from each other. Our topic this year is "On the Way." Beginning in Luke Chapter 9, Jesus "sets his face toward Jerusalem" and begins his journey there. On the way, he has encounters, engages in teaching moments, and does miracles. What can we learn from Jesus about our journey of faith? Others need to hear your voice! Come join us to be in God's Word together as we intentionally interact and grow together!



June 1 - Mary and Martha
June 9 - Jesus Teaches Us to Pray
June 16 - "Do not be anxious..."
June 23 - On the Road to Emmaus

Parking & Popcorn

Come join us 4th of July for popcorn & fireworks. Hope Lutheran Church will provide the parking & popcorn. The City of Friendswood will provide the fireworks.

Fireworks start at around 9:00'ish, so stop by the back sidewalk area for popcorn before the show begins.

Pop by. . .we'd love to have you!! Bring your neighbors and friends!!



Spending Plan for Fiscal Year 2020
 April 1, 2019—March 31, 2020
 Approved at the March 17, 2019 Voters' Meeting

		Current Plan FY 2020
OUTREACH	<i>Missions, Advertising, Website & Email Hosting</i>	\$76,896
EDUCATION	<i>Sunday School Materials, Adult Education, Confirmation, Teacher Support, VBS</i>	\$8,850
CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS	<i>Easter Activity, Christmas Program & Activities, SWAT, Misc. Supplies</i>	\$2,300
YOUTH	<i>Junior High & Senior High Activities and Supplies, Subscriptions, Transportation</i>	\$10,700
ASSIMILATION	<i>New Member Receptions, Miscellaneous Supplies</i>	\$200
FINANCE	<i>Debt Payment, Bank Fees, Contingency Transfer</i>	\$46,505
PERSONNEL	<i>Salaries, Housing Allowance, Car Allowance, Medical, Retirement & Disability, Payroll Taxes</i>	\$658,552
MUSIC	<i>Adult Choir, Handbell Choir, Brass/Woodwind, Children's Choirs, Substitute/Guest Organist</i>	\$6,250
FACILITIES	<i>Insurance, Utilities, Maintenance Contracts, General & Property Maintenance, Janitorial Service</i>	\$216,892
OFFICE & WORSHIP	<i>Copier, Office Supplies, Printing, Offering Envelopes, Worship Supplies, Attendance Cards</i>	\$40,820
MISC. MINISTRIES	<i>Small Group, Stephen Ministry, Faith Builders, Christian Helping Hands, Meals on Wheels</i>	\$12,350
CONFERENCES & TRAINING	<i>Staff Training, Conferences, District / Synodical Conventions</i>	\$9,500
TOTAL		\$1,089,815



Class of 2019

Congratulations to our graduating seniors:

Mitchell Ahrens
Ashley Alff
Macey Braswell
Marshall Breaux
Hannah Craft
Andrea Frank
Gabriel Gonzales
Elisabeth Guzman
Thomas Hamre
Benjamin Haverty
Elizabeth Hawkins
Zachary Little
Zachary Peterson
Brooke Pfleeger
Collin Rhodes
Travis Rhodes
Elizabeth Ricaldi
Jonathan Tubbs

Congratulations to our Confirmands

It has become our tradition at Hope to practice the Rite of Confirmation on the Birthday of the Church — Pentecost. On Sunday, June 9 we will hear the confirmation of the baptismal faith of:

Kyle Bargas, Mackenzie Beall, Ashtyn Carver, Caily Carver, Jacob Craft, Lydiann Eckeberger, Evan Guzman, Tristan Hobratchk, Hunter Hovorka, Asa Kueck, Riley Leimer, Blake Matthijetz, Josiah Norris, Isabella Reyes, Jonathan Scheer, Luke Van Chau, Curt White, and Jack Williams

May God strengthen your commitment as you are invited into a fuller participation in the Body of Christ.



Cardboard Regatta—Summer at Hope

Ahoy mateys! Senior High Youth are issuing a challenge, to young and to old, to join them for the Cardboard Regatta! What is that you ask? Why it's a boat race that's all about fun and very little about racing! Participating teams will build their boat with just cardboard and duct tape—nope, no FlexSeal, no varnish, no paint, just 2 rolls of duct tape and you're imagination! Teams can be made up of all ages—there is a competition with just two of your team mates navigating an obstacle course in the pool—still floating? That's where the rest of the team comes in—how many can get in the boat before it sinks? How about the best decorating theme?



Boats are assembled BEFORE race day so your team has a great opportunity to fellowship and combine their gifts—how about a BBQ at Bob and Sue's house for the big build?

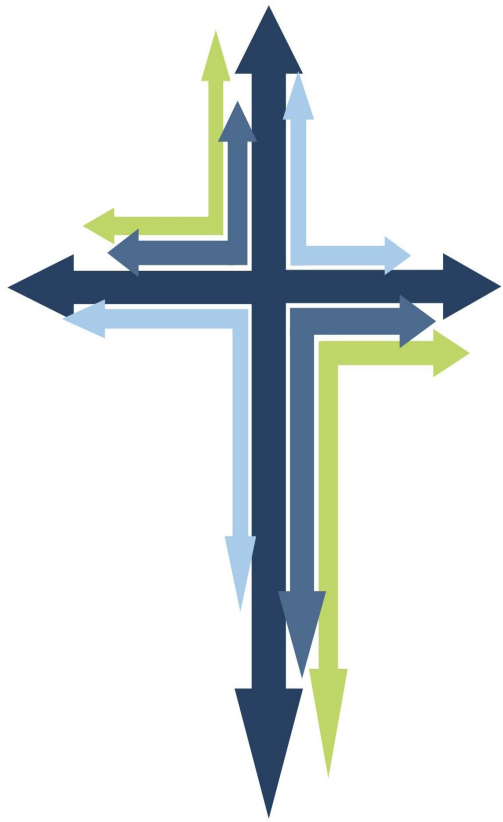
Not too sure about your nautical aspirations? That's okay—we'll need plenty of onlookers for this fun and funny fellowship time! Come join us for hot dogs and the thrill of the outcome! Sunday, August 11.



Lent / Easter 2019



Intersect: Doing Summer Together as a Faith Family



Looking for some adventure this summer? We've got you covered! During the month of July we offer a variety of service projects designed for all ages and abilities—each Sunday, following our 9:30am service, we invite EVERYONE to gather in the gym to select and join projects that impact our faith family and community. From the youngest to the oldest in your household, whether you are looking to get your hands dirty or prefer something a little more laid back, even if you only have time to drop something off and run, we've tried to create opportunities that appeal.

Some of the great projects this summer will include:

Buddy Benches: Buddy Benches started with a warm hearted young boy named Christian, who heard of the idea from a school overseas and pushed for it on his own school campus—they have since spread far and wide in the US. The idea is that if you're feeling sad or lonely you take a seat on the buddy bench and others know, when they see someone there, to join them and do something together. We have a grand goal of creating 8 buddy benches for school campuses this summer!

Quilts!: The Knotty Ladies have been busy piecing quilts and need lots of hands to tie the pieced quilts—no experience needed! If you can tie a knot, you can help!

Choir for a Day: taking the gift of music to area nursing homes, there's no audition for this throw together choir spreading cheer! We will have a brief time of practice so everyone knows the songs and off we'll go!

Missionary Impact: last summer we reached out all the way to China—this summer we're reaching to College Station, Texas where our own Erin (Hinga) Dewberry and her husband, Allen are serving college students. Allen has devoted full time to ministry among the students and has asked for notes of encouragement he can share, especially with newcomers at the schools. We will also collect snacks and gift cards to be shared as they make those critical points of contact, sharing the Gospel.

Make a Meal: we will gather cooks of all ages in the kitchen to prep meals for both Family Promise and Mercy Tree—filling tummies and hearts in ministry among the homeless population.

Many more projects will be offered--- visiting homes, area sites and agencies. We will even have an "Amazing Race Service Challenge" for you to do with friends or as a family! Watch for the details and we'll see you in the gym, Sundays in July!



2018 Intersect



Join us this July





HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH
1804 S. Friendswood Dr.
P.O. Box 1076
Friendswood, TX 77549

Return Services Requested

A Non-Profit Org.
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Ralph W. Hobratschk, Senior Pastor

Jonathan E. Petering, Associate Pastor

