

House of Hope Launches Capital Campaign



Dear Friends,

As you likely know by now, *Bright Hope for Tomorrow*, is the title chosen for our capital campaign for our building infrastructure project to update the HVAC, electrical panels, and other projects. Eric Kruse, our Owner's Representative with Pegasus Group, describes our project as an "enabling project." He means that it is a project that enables everything else that the congregation hopes to do in the future.

Our hope is that you will begin to prayerfully consider how you will participate in this vitally important campaign. All gifts are important. If everyone in our church will start to prayerfully consider how they can participate in the campaign, then something extraordinary will happen.

You've received or will be receiving a Campaign Brochure and supporting documents detailing the *Bright Hope for Tomorrow* campaign purpose. Please read the materials carefully. They should answer any of your questions concerning *Bright Hope for Tomorrow*.

We invite you to make plans to join us in worship on **Sunday, April 14th for Celebration Sunday**, when we will receive pledges for the campaign from parishioners and celebrate the generosity of the congregation with a party in the Great Hall immediately after church.

The days ahead are some of the most critical in the history of this church. It is our great hope that we will come together in prayer and common purpose and respond in such a way that we will see the hand of God in our work.

Blessings,

William B. Geery Diane K. Smith

Bill Geery and Diane Smith
Bright Hope for Tomorrow Campaign Co-Chairs

THE DIDIER SEMINAR 2024

Recovering Lost Voices with **Stephen J. Patterson and** **Elizabeth Schrader Polczer** **April 19 - 21**

House of Hope is fortunate to have two leading biblical scholars for The Didier Seminar this year who are helping to recover lost voices from early Christianity: Stephen J. Patterson and Elizabeth Schrader Polczer.



Stephen J. Patterson

A scholar, teacher, and writer, Patterson is the George H. Atkinson endowed chair in Religious and Ethical Studies at Willamette University, where he teaches courses on the history of religion. He writes and lectures widely on the hidden

histories of earliest Christianity, especially the lost gospels, Q, and the Gospel of Thomas. He will speak on his award-winning book: *The Forgotten Creed: Christianity's Original Struggle against Bigotry, Slavery, & Sexism*.



Elizabeth Schrader Polczer

Elizabeth "Libbie" Schrader Polczer is Assistant Professor of New Testament at Villanova University, having recently defended her PhD in Early Christianity and New Testament at Duke University. Her studies focus on textual criticism, Mary Magdalene,

and the Gospel of John. Elizabeth transitioned to religious scholarship after a career as a singer/songwriter. After writing a song about Mary Magdalene, Elizabeth enrolled in the M.A. program at General Theological Seminary.

Register at <https://bit.ly/Didier2024>
Learn more at <https://bit.ly/HOHDidierSeminar>

Friday, April 19:

6:30 p.m. Dessert Reception
7:30 p.m. Lecture by Stephen H. Patterson

Saturday, April 20:

9:30 a.m. Lecture by Elizabeth Schrader Polczer
11 a.m. A Conversation with Patterson and Schrader Polczer

Sunday, April 21:

10 a.m. Worship with Stephen J. Patterson preaching
11:15 a.m. Enrichment: Q&A with Stephen J. Patterson

WORSHIP

10 a.m.

Sunday, April 7, 2024
Second Sunday of Easter with Holy Communion
Generosity Sunday

Motet Choir:
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, Martin

Sunday, April 14, 2024
Third Sunday of Easter
Commitment Sunday and Celebration

Bells of Hope:
Nocturne in E minor, Dobrinski
Festival Intrada, Hopson

Motet Choir:
With a Voice of Singing, Shaw

Sunday, April 21, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Easter

Motet Choir:
O Sing Joyfully, Batten
Ubi Caritas, Duruflé

Sunday, April 28, 2024
Fifth Sunday of Easter

Choir School
Mass for Young Voices, Op. 62
by Joseph Rheinberger
St Nicholas Choir



Pastor Nominating Committee

The PNC is in the early stages of reviewing pastoral profiles. The committee is grateful for the continued prayers and support of the congregation.



A Note from Scott

Theological Earthquakes

The Didier Seminar this year (April 19, 20, & 21) is an event not to be missed. We are fortunate to have two of the best biblical scholars in the United States as our guests for the weekend—**Stephen J. Patterson** is the George H. Atkinson Professor of Religious and Ethical Studies at Willamette University and a member of the United Church of Christ. A historian of religion, Patterson specializes in the origins of Christianity, especially the hidden histories found in books that were not included in the Bible. He has authored or co-authored nine books and more than a hundred essays, articles, and reviews, including his most recent award-winning book, *The Forgotten Creed: Christianity's Original Struggle against Bigotry, Slavery, and Sexism*. His thesis is that one of the earliest creeds of the church (faith statement) can be found in Paul's letter to the Galatians, Chapter 3:26-28: *For you are all children of God in the Spirit. There is no Jew or Greek; There is no slave or free; There is no male and female. For you are all one in the Spirit.* Patterson writes the following in the Introduction to his book (page 5): *As I began to think about this creed more and more over the years, it gradually occurred to me that it if was actually a pre-Pauline formula, then it would belong to the earliest attempts to capture in words the meaning of the Jesus movement. There are no Christian writings older than Paul's letters. Therefore, anything embedded in these letters could lay claim to the title of 'first.' Was this the first Christian creed? Arguably, yes. What does Christianity have to say about race, class, and gender? Everything apparently, at least originally.* The implications and challenges of this are obvious for contemporary church and society: Where did this remarkable statement of human solidarity come from, and what, finally, happened to it? How did Christianity (in some of

its dominant historical expressions) become a Gentile religion that despised Jews, condoned slavery as the will of God, and championed patriarchy? Patterson will answer these questions and more over the course of the weekend. Copies of his book (highly accessible for lay audiences, 160 pages) are available for purchase in the church office.

Elizabeth Schrader Polczer is Assistant Professor of New Testament at Villanova University, having recently defended her PhD in Early Christianity and New Testament at Duke University. Her presentation will be: *Recovering Mary Magdalene in the Manuscripts of John's Gospel: A Case of Textual Suppression?* This may sound a bit wonky, but Libbie (her nickname) will be talking about a discovery she made as a Masters level student at General Theological Seminary in New York City that is, perhaps, one of the most important and exciting (and controversial!) developments in biblical scholarship in recent years; namely, that the earliest manuscript for John 11-12 (Papyrus 66, dated to around 200) was altered by someone in the fourth century and **split the character of Mary (Mary Magdalene—the Tower) in two. Mary became Mary and Martha.**

According to Diana Butler Bass, Libbie "went through the whole manuscript of John 11 and 12, and lo and behold, that editor had gone in at every single place and changed every moment that you read Martha in English, it originally said, 'Mary.' The editor changed it all. So that the story becomes a charming story about Lazarus and the resurrection and his two lovely sisters, Mary and Martha. Haven't we seen them before? *Oh yeah, I remember seeing them in Luke 10. But they are not in Luke (it's a different family; these are two different stories).* This is some editor's idea of ... harmonizing **Continued on the next page.**

A Note from Scott continued

the text ... Somebody in the fourth century decided that John was confusing, and this John fellow had bad Greek. And so the editor went in there to fix it. And he fixed it. He fixed it so good that we have been telling the story wrong ever since."

For the complete background (that reads like a good, "who done-it!") behind this fascinating and important story, see Diana Butler Bass's sermon downloaded more than one million times, "All the Mary's" at <https://bit.ly/MaryTheTower>. Which begs the question: "What if the text was changed to suppress Mary Magdalene as not only the first witness of Jesus in John 20, but as the Christological confessor, which would make her a central character in the

Gospel of John? Not one of several women, but a central character."

Diana Butler Bass once more: "What if the other story of Mary hadn't been hidden? What if Mary in John 11 hadn't been split into two women? What if we'd known about Mary the Tower all along? What kind of Christianity would we have if the faith hadn't only been based upon, 'Peter, you are the Rock and upon this Rock I will build my church?' But what if we'd always known, 'Mary, you are the Tower, and by this Tower we shall all stand?'"

Currently, there is a debate going on in the highest circles of New Testament studies as to whether or not Libbie's research should turn into a very long footnote in the next edition of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible in English. Or if they should

change John 11 and John 12 and take Martha out. Radical stuff, indeed!

It's easy to see the parallels between the work of Stephen J. Patterson and the groundbreaking research of Elizabeth Schrader Polczer.

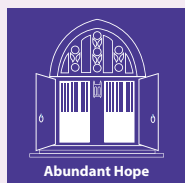
But these are not mere academic exercises—their scholarship has real life implications for how Christian people understand and practice their faith today.

As I've already said, the Didier Seminar this year is not to be missed! I look forward to seeing you there.

Blessings,
Scott Kenefake
Transitional Pastor

You can learn more about our Didier Seminar speakers at:
<https://bit.ly/HOHDidierSeminar>

Abundant Hope: Stewardship 2024



**Help us
reach
our goal!**

Our goal for stewardship and giving is \$1,350,000, and we are close to reaching it! **If everyone who pledged last year will pledge again for 2024, we be at 95% of the goal.**

If you have not pledged yet, it is not too late to turn in your pledge, and **help us reach 100% of our goal.**

Reaching this goal will enable us to fully fund our music, children, and youth programs, congregational life ministries, sustain our Mission Outreach giving, and add additional ministries. Pledge cards are available in the church office, or you can pledge online at:

<https://bit.ly/HOH2024Pledge>

You can give online at:

<https://bit.ly/HOHGiving>

Temporary HOH Library

A selection of books from the church library is available in Room 3 in the East Wing during regular office hours.



MUSIC AT HOUSE OF HOPE

Singing for All Ages at The House of Hope Choir School

Do you enjoy the music at HOH but feel shy about participating? Perhaps as a child you were told that you couldn't sing. Or maybe you'd just like to try something new! This class is for you! **Adult Group Voice** will explore the fundamentals of music and singing in a positive and relaxed space. Join us for three 45 minute sessions on April 16, 23, 30, starting at 1p.m.; \$45 for three classes. Space is limited. Registration by April 12. To register and for more information email Choir School Director Sofia Ardalan: SofiaA@hohchurch.org.

Choir School Special Music Sunday: April 28

Choristers from our St Nicholas Choir will present Joseph Rheinberger's *Mass for Young Voices, Op. 62*, during worship on Sunday, April 28. A 19th century Austrian organist and composer, Rheinberger uses beautiful melodies and lush harmonies to set

this ancient text. We invite you to experience this rarely performed work brought to life by our young singers.

Young Singers Invited to Visit The Choir School Wednesday, April 17

All children currently in Kindergarten through Grade 2 are invited to visit the Choir School on Wednesday April 17. Join our St Cecilia choristers for a fun 40 minute class with singing, games, and movement. 4:30-5:10 p.m., Wednesday April 17. Email Choir School Director Sofia Ardalan to sign up! SofiaA@hohchurch.org.





Session Approves New Mission Statement for House of Hope

Following a proposal from the Developing for the Future Collaboration Group, a new House of Hope Mission Statement was approved by the Elders at the February 20 Session meeting. The new Mission Statement reads:

Building a loving community for all, House of Hope shares God's grace and presence through music, the arts, reflection, and action. Come join us as we walk through life together.

The Developing for the Future Collaboration Group wanted to create a Mission Statement that is a more visionary, outward-facing statement than the more traditional inward-facing statement from 1994. It's also more compact, so it can be used more often in more places.

Donations for Keystone Community Services



The Bells of Hope continue to collect calendars, note cards, greeting cards, and cloth

bags for Keystone Community Services. Donations are being accepted at our new location in Room 5 of the East Wing, near the Summit entrance. A collection box is in the hallway beside the door.



Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Children and Family Ministry

Contact Dr. Jimmy Hoke:

JimmyH@hohchurch.org

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Contact Jimmy if you are able to help with Sunday morning ministry with children.

3rd Grade Bible Classes Sundays, April 21 and 28 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Third graders and their caregivers are invited to learn about the Bible as they prepare to receive Bibles in worship on Sunday, May 5. Any fourth or fifth grader who did not receive a Bible in past years—or didn't participate in classes before are welcome.

Early Childhood Ministry for Nursery – Preschool Sundays | Rooms 4 and 7 8:45 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Our nursery and preschool-age children are invited to join us to engage with stories, listen to music, and play with age-appropriate toys.

Elementary Sunday School Rooms 4 and 7 | 10:10 a.m. April 14, 21, and 28

Elementary-age children are invited to join us for Bible storytelling, prayer, group games, and art-making as they build community through play.

Visit the HOH Choir School! Wednesday, April 17 | Choir School Room | 4:30-5:15 p.m.

Kindergarten/1st/2nd graders are invited to visit The Choir School for music, games, singing, and treats. Email Choir School Director Sofia Ardalan by April 15 to sign up:
SofiaA@hohchurch.org.

Tween Event | Friday, April 12 Can Can Wonderland | 5:30 p.m.

Join us for arcade games, dinner, mini-golf, kids' karaoke, and more. R.S.V.P. by emailing Jimmy. Chaperones are also needed.

Youth and Family Ministry

Contact Elsa Kendig:

ElsaK@hohchurch.org

Youth Moveable Feast Sunday, April 7

Nearby Restaurant | 11:15 a.m.

Gather by the center door to Summit. Please RSVP so that we know who to look for.

Youth Parent Group Sunday, April 7

Nearby Restaurant | 11:15 a.m.

A chance to connect and build community with other youth parents. Gather by the center door to Summit. Please R.S.V.P. so that we know who to look for.

Lunch and a Movie Sunday, April 21 | Nearby theater 11:15 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Gather in the Youth Room so we can carpool. We'll grab lunch near the theater. Bring money for the movie and lunch. Please R.S.V.P. for planning transportation.

Sunday Night Youth Group Sunday, April 28 | Room 7 | 6-8 p.m.

We'll do a pot-luck dinner together, a little conversation and then time for games in the church!

Confirmation Wednesdays in April Youth Room | 6:30 p.m.

Gather by the center door to Summit. Please R.S.V.P. so that we know who to look for.

Confirmation Statement of Belief Writing Retreat Saturday, April 13

Location TBD | 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

The final writing retreat for this year's confirmands and their mentors. Snacks and fodder for the mind and spirit will be available to fuel reflection and writing.

APRIL

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Sunday Enrichment: Clare Lewis, President and CEO of Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program

Sunday, April 7

Great Hall | 11:15 a.m.

Our congregation has chosen to obtain a bridge loan for our HVAC and electrical project through the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program.

The loan that was used to fund our project came from other Presbyterians. Clare Lewis, from the Investment & Loan Program will be with us and hold a brief meeting right after worship. At this meeting, Clare will explain the details of the investments and how you could become a supporting investor.

Celebration Sunday

Sunday, April 14

Great Hall | 11:15 a.m.

In worship, we will present our pledges for the *Bright Hope for Tomorrow* campaign. Following worship, we will celebrate the generosity of the congregation with a party in the Great Hall immediately after the service.

Sunday Enrichment with Didier Seminar Speaker Stephen J. Patterson

Sunday, April 21 | 11:15 a.m.

Join us after worship for a question and answer session with Stephen J. Patterson.

OTHER EVENTS

Great Decisions with Henry Berman: Middle East Realignment

Tuesday, April 9

Kirk Parlour | 3 p.m.

Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East have solidified most regional blocs that clearly identify which countries are friends with whom. We will examine those blocs and how some

are changing. Particular attention will be focused on the impact of the Gaza War and potential realignments that could lead to a more comprehensive regional peace.

HOH Men's Retreat

Friday, April 12: 6-8 p.m.

Saturday, April 13 | 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Join men from the House of Hope as we explore the practical and spiritual significance of using our gifts of time and talent. What skills have we honed through our personal and professional lives? What challenges have shaped us? To what might God be calling us in the unfolding chapters of our lives?



Facilitator Richard Matson-Daley will teach and walk alongside us on the journey. He has served as a college minister and as an

associate pastor at Pilgrim Baptist Church. He works at Minnesota IT Services in the Office of Transformation and Strategy Delivery.

Dinner will be available Friday evening, and light breakfast and lunch provided Saturday. Childcare available Saturday morning upon request. Registration of \$50 for both days will cover meals and facilitator fees. Register at: <https://bit.ly/HOHMensRetreat2024> or contact the church office.

HOH Women's Retreat: Reviving Our Matriarchs

St. John's Abbey Guesthouse

Friday, April 26 - Sunday, April 28

**Register Sunday, April 7 | Hallway
by the Kirk Parlour | 11:15 a.m.**

Our spiritual lives have been shaped by the stories of people who went before us: ancestors biological or familial; but also cultural, religious, and historical.



Rev. Erica Schemper will lead us in discussing the stories of our female spiritual ancestors from a variety of angles, starting with Biblical matriarchs, and then matriarchs in our own histories,

and what we can learn from the way we interact with their stories as well. Our first session will begin on Friday at 7 p.m. During this retreat, we'll be talking about women whose history and stories have influenced our spiritual journeys. These women may be familial ancestors, but also Biblical, spiritual, community, or historical ancestors. You may want to spend a little time before the retreat thinking about the stories of some of these women, preparing to engage with those stories more.

A New HOH Member Directory!

Plans are underway for a new church directory! During April, we will offer opportunities to sign up for photographs to be taken at HOH between Tuesday, May 7 and Saturday, May 11. Watch for more details. In addition to having your photo taken at the church, you can also submit a photo to be used in the directory. Volunteer are needed. Call or email the church at hoh@hohchurch.org to volunteer.



Earth Care

Celebrate Earth Day

Fifty-four years ago, the first Earth Day launched the birth of the modern environmental movement. Each year billions of people worldwide celebrate by taking action to show their commitment to halt climate disruption. You can do so by joining your neighbors to clean up the litter that has accumulated through the winter months in our parks and on our neighborhood streets. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and local organizations are hosting the 38th annual **Citywide Spring Cleanup on Saturday, April 20, 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.** at parks and other locations throughout the city. No pre-registration required. Simply stop by a kickoff site of your choice for instructions and supplies. For locations and helpful information visit <https://bit.ly/EarthDaySaintPaul>



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*The House of Hope
Presbyterian Church is a
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**COVENANT NETWORK
OF PRESBYTERIANS**

*The House of Hope Presbyterian
Church is a Covenant Network
Congregation.*



SUNDAY SERIES WITH HEATHER COX RICHARDSON

On March 10, noted historian, Heather Cox Richardson spoke to a capacity audience of 700 people in the sanctuary. She is the author of several best-selling books and the most popular writer on Substack, with 1.3 million readers and counting. Moreover, she publishes a widely read daily blog, *Letters from an American*, that puts current events in their larger historical context.

The theme of her presentation was "Preserving American Democracy" and how two conflicting ideas, inherent in the founding of our country, continue to compete for people's hearts and minds: 1). the idea, found in the Declaration of Independence, that all people are created equal and should be treated equally under the law, and 2) the idea that some people are better than others and should naturally rule over others.

She traced these ideas throughout American history, but focused particularly on the decade of 1853-1863, when the southern, slave-holding states, and the Democratic Party, took control of Congress, the White House, and the Federal Courts, and were determined to expand slavery into the western territories and to impose it on the northern states.

In response, the American people began to wake up—this led to the formation of the new Republican Party to prevent the expansion of slavery, the election of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency, the outbreak of the Civil War, the Gettysburg Address (a new birth of freedom), and the Emancipation Proclamation—which ended slavery.

Her point was that it was the actions of ordinary people that changed history at a time when it seemed that those who

believed in hierarchy had won the day. She concluded that we are living in a similar time—and have similar choices to make about the future of our country and what kind of a society we want to live in. It was a non-partisan presentation that helped people to understand that we have lived through similar situations in the past and that the actions of millions of ordinary people makes the difference in how things ultimately turn out—a hopeful message.



HOUSE OF HOPE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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