



ignite

A Publication of New Hope Ministries

FALL 2017 - Hurricane Edition



**We lost our electricity,
but not our power.**

*For God has not given us a
spirit of fear, but of power
and of love and of a sound
mind. 2 Timothy 1:7*



#NewHopeNaples

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Sunday - 9:00am, 11:00am & 6:00pm
Wednesday - 7:00pm

Office Hours:

8:30am - 4:30pm, Monday - Thursday
8:30am - 12:00pm on Friday

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The Cover Story

We're naming this issue of Ignite our "Hurricane Edition." In contrast to the news media, we are highlighting the positive things that happened before, during, and after Hurricane Irma.

The cover photo was taken at Johnny and Gwen Brown's home two weeks after the storm. Here's what Gwen had to say about Hurricane Irma:

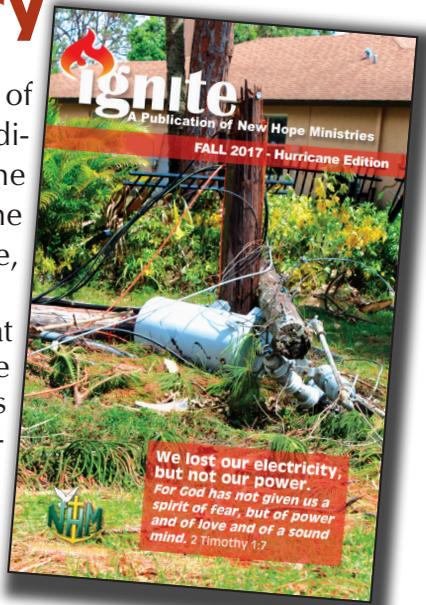
"When the storm was over, my husband, Johnny, and I went outside to assess the damage. A huge ficus tree had blown down and was leaning on our roof. The ficus took with it a pine tree, which punctured a hole in our roof. Also, a very large limb had fallen over Johnny's crab traps. I was overwhelmed with the magnitude of the debris removal facing us.

"On the morning of Saturday, September 23, a group of New Hope School of Ministries 2016 alumni, along with Pastor Steve McGraw, his children, sister, and niece, came to our house. They arrived with rakes, gloves, and chain saws, and went to work cleaning up the yard. Before the work began we stood in a circle, held hands, and prayed. Once again I was overwhelmed, but this time by the love of God!

"Charissa McGraw had coordinated the work effort on September 23, which was her birthday. During the day I mentioned, 'What a way to spend your birthday, raking and cleaning my yard.' She replied, 'It's actually one of the best birthdays I've had.' When another person commented, 'Her parents must give lousy birthday parties,' she responded, 'It was great just to serve and bless someone.' Be assured, Charissa, I was blessed!"

*By this all will know that you are My disciples,
if you have love for one another.*

John 13:35 NKJV



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From the Tree Stand

by Pastor Grant Thigpen

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**For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
2 Timothy 1:7**

Wednesday, September 6, 2017 was a beautiful sun-shiny day. Due to modern technology, we knew the weather would not remain that way during the coming days, as a large storm was headed towards Florida. I posted a video on the New Hope Ministries Facebook page reminding everyone that 2 Timothy 1:7 says, *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

During situations like Hurricane Irma, we're not supposed to be operating in a spirit of fear. We should be operating in a spirit of love. Love for our family and our neighbors. We

also need to have a disciplined mind during these stressful and tense situations. There are usually many important decisions that need to be made, and we need to be calm and focused in order to choose wisely.

Remember, our Father never leaves us nor forsakes us. No matter what the weather is like, we know that He is here. He's given us every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. We have to claim His hand of protection over His people during times like this. It's through God that we can have a sound mind, so we can make wise decisions and proper choices, and not have a spirit of fear, but have a spirit of love and power.

**"Don't let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God, and trust also in me."
John 14:1**

In our summer Ignite issue I described the rich heritage that has been passed down to me through the maternal side of my family. On November 11, Americans celebrate Veteran's Day and I can't help but be reminded of the role my dad, Gordon Crofut, played in the heritage of my family and of the United States of America.

Because of his and most of his schoolmates' sacrifice to enlist and serve in WWII, we have much of the freedom we take for granted. Dad was only seventeen when he joined the US Navy and shipped out aboard the USS Thurston. He did indeed "see the world," but it's not something he speaks of, and it certainly doesn't bring him fond memories. He carried much guilt over the things war required of him. While he physically survived the war as the driver of a landing craft onto multiple beaches throughout Europe, including France's Normandy on



D-day, the mental anguish of war took its toll on him. For more than twenty years he had horrible nightmares, could not watch a movie about war, and refused to speak about his experiences.

I'm proud of my dad for his role in WWII, but more importantly that (in his mid forties) he asked Jesus into his heart and has never looked back. God did miraculous things in his life. He took away the guilt and the nightmares, filled my dad with the Holy Spirit, and instantly set him free from alcohol and cigarettes. Dad still doesn't care to speak of WWII, but he is more than willing to talk unceasingly about the Lord and spiritual things.

Thank you to all the brave military men and women who currently serve, as well as those who have previously served this great country. My prayer is that each will know Jesus, who sticks closer than a brother, and will find the truth of Isaiah 26:3: *You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you.*

Faye Sentovich has been a worship leader since she was twelve years old. Upon moving to Naples in 1987, she began attending New Hope Ministries and immediately joined the choir. She is a 1992 graduate of the New Hope School of Ministries, and has held leadership roles in the women's ministry, youth, and children's departments. Faye has been the editor, typographer, and design/production coordinator of Ignite since January, 2014.



Staff Spotlight



Gwen Brown, Director of the New Hope School of Ministries, was a first-time guest at NHM on Father's Day, 1988. She's been faithfully attending since that day. Gwen began volunteering in the church office, and in 1995 she had the opportunity to work in the NHM office. Prior to being appointed as the NHSM director, Gwen spent a number of years as an administrative assistant and secretary in the office. She loves to teach Bible related topics and began teaching classes at NHM and for the NHSM in 1996. It is a great joy for her to hear how the NHSM has changed lives through the study of the Word, and to see the spiritual growth and development of a deeper relationship with the Lord in the students.

When asked, "What's something most people don't know about you?" Gwen replied, "I'm pretty much an open book, but not many people know that my youngest brother (now with the Lord) was born with Down Syndrome. He taught me a lot about people!"

Born in Kansas, Gwen spent

most of her school years in Illinois. Her family moved to Naples in the summer of 1969, and she graduated from Naples High School in 1971. Through friends she met a handsome fisherman from Chokoloskee named Johnny Brown. They were married in a small bayou town in Louisiana in 1973, and moved back to Naples in 1977. Johnny has supported his family by fishing for mullet and kingfish, and stone crabbing during the fall and winter seasons.

Gwen is the mother of two adult children, Travis and Nicole, and grandmother to a teenage boy, Tyler. She is also "mom" to Sissy and Baby, miniature pincher (min pin) sisters. When given the opportunity, Gwen likes to wander through junky antique shops. She makes a very tasty banana pudding, when she remembers the bananas! She says, "Forget the bananas once or twice and you never live it down!" Gwen also really enjoys having lunch out with friends.

Behind the Veil

by Margie Barnett

During the time I was a member of the choir at New Hope Ministries, I received a prompting from the Holy Spirit to purchase materials to make flags. Being a worshipper, I didn't want to miss an opportunity to praise our Lord and give Him glory, so I purchased wooden dowels and fabric of red, white, purple and gold. I had never been involved in a church where flags were used; this was new to me. I had no idea the colors I selected had Biblical meaning: red for the blood of Jesus; white for purity, holiness and the Bride of Christ; purple for His royalty and majesty; and gold for His glory and the Godhead.

When the people came to the altar to pray, I believed something was happening in the spirit realm as flags were waved over them. Through prayer, fasting, and searching the scriptures, *Behind the Veil Worship Ministry* was birthed to glorify God and to edify the Body of Christ.

Scriptures confirm the importance and impact of flags, banners, and rods in battle. For example, Exodus 17:15 proclaims that Jehovah is our banner, while the banners in Numbers 1:52, 2:2-3, and 10:14 identify a tribe or family group. We are the family of God. Flags, banners, lifted hands, and the dance are among

some of the ways that can also represent praise, honor, and reverence to God and our celebration of Him.

We are grateful for the support of NHM and the commitment of parents who sacrifice their time to regularly bring their daughters to rehearsals and worship events. We believe this ministry has a great impact on the life of each girl who participates. We have regular Bible studies and mentoring times, which help reinforce what the girls learn at church and from their parents. The family is vitally important, and the family support our girls receive is outstanding. Extended family and friends also come to NHM, community events, and other local churches to watch them worship.



We have young girls waiting for approximately two years to be "of age" to become a part of the ministry. Mothers have expressed how much it has meant for their



daughters to be involved with *Behind the Veil*. The girls are learning the true meaning of worship.

Prior to moving away from Naples, Julio Papin, who provided American Sign Language for Pastor Grant's sermons, taught our girls some signing to go along with the dance. This was an

added blessing to the ministry. We are grateful for the opportunity to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. We pray that *Behind the Veil Worship Ministries* will continue to bless the Lord and edify the Body of Christ.



Margie Barnett and her husband, Horace, moved to Naples from Indiana eleven years ago. After hearing the NHM choir sing at an event at Cambier Park, they began attending NHM and subsequently became members. Margie also enjoys visiting local nursing homes where she sings and worships the Lord with the elderly.

Make a Difference

Angel Tree 2017

Starting Nov. 26th you can pick an angel off the tree.

Make it a family tradition and help someone who is in need.

Items are needed by December 13th.

GOD'S PEACE CORPS

by Jesse Barrett

We all remember where we were on September 11, 2001, when we heard about the two hijacked planes that were flown into the World Trade Center. We were shocked that someone would do something so diabolical on our native U.S. soil. Some of us were scared because we couldn't reach loved ones in New York, who worked or lived near the Trade Center, to see if they were okay. The enemy, Satan, was trying to break us as a nation. When terrorists declared war on us, the enemy's evil plan seemed to be a success; however, our country embraced the complete opposite of what was intended.

Now, in 2017, seeing how people offered to help each other in the immediate days and weeks following Hurricane Irma reminded me of how our nation reacted sixteen years ago to the day. (Did you realize the day after the storm passed was 9/11?) I saw people go out and meet, for the first time, the neighbors who'd lived next to them for years. They offered to share what little food they had. They even shared generators and box fans. People who had barely enough water to last the week were willing to share with others who didn't have any at all. People offered to pray for total strangers affected by the

storm, or buy their meal at a restaurant when they heard they had evacuated from down south.

The week after Irma, once electricity was restored to NHM, we hosted a community cookout. I witnessed a friend, normally an introvert, going door to door in her condo development. She was telling all her neighbors, "New Hope is having a cook-out today. They'll have air conditioning, free food, and ice-cold bottles of water!"

I heard about teams of people from around town that started cleaning up yards for widows, senior citizens, and people with special needs. No one asked them to do this; they did it because they knew deep down inside it was the right thing to do.

People were devastated when Hurricane Irma hit Southwest Florida. Many lost their homes, cars, businesses, and their life savings. But, we all need to remember this important fact: *God did not create Hurricane Irma*. This disaster, like what happened on September 11, 2001, was also an attack of the enemy. We are at war with a spiritual enemy, and it's our duty to go out and be God's Peace Corps. The mission of the U.S. Peace Corps is to promote peace and friendship. As God's Peace Corps, it is our mission to show the love of Jesus Christ to everyone.

First Corinthians 13 explains that we don't see things clearly right now; in essence, we won't be able to understand what happened on 9/11 or why we have hurricanes or tornados. However, it goes on to say that one day we will see all things clearly. But until that day comes, we have three things that will last forever: faith in God, unwavering hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

Remember this: we should be

Jesse Barrett has attended New Hope Ministries for the majority of his life. He has been on staff since 2013, and was named NHM's Media Director in 2015. Jesse oversees all print and digital media, including the church Facebook page and the website. He and his wife, Abbi, are currently attending the New Hope School of Ministries.



out there doing things like this for our neighbors and community all the time, not just after the big disasters. I don't know if you realize it, but we're at war, and it's time to prove to the enemy that he can't break us. Instead of division, we have unity; instead of confusion, we have clarity; instead of falling apart, we band together.

This is the way God's Peace Corps will always respond.



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"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat..."
Matthew 25:35

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Build Bridges for Your Children

by Lori McGraw

I remember sitting on my couch reliving failure after failure, and feeling so condemned that I just sobbed. I had wanted to be the best mom ever. Even before I was married, I read parenting books and articles to learn more. But they didn't do me any good, except to set a standard that I constantly fell short of. I now knew I was not a good mother. No matter how hard I tried to be loving and patient, I always ended up as an angry, exasperated, and abusive parent. Everything I did seemed to hurt my children. I sat there despairing.

Then I heard the still small voice of the Lord asking me, "Is it true that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus?" (See Romans 8:1) Of course I knew it was true. It was the Word of God, and according to His Word, I was not condemned, even though I had failed and failed and failed. He followed it up with, "You are accepted in the beloved." (See Ephesians 1:6) Not only was I not condemned, Christ had made me acceptable! It was at that point I realized my feelings must be wrong, because the Word of God couldn't be. I didn't understand how it could be possible, but it brought me hope. There was hope, in the Lord, even for me. From then on, Jesus began to teach me to follow Him and to

keep my eyes on Him and on what He was doing.

As I kept looking for Jesus in my life, I found that He was working on me, but His focus didn't seem to have anything to do with my concerns. He was speaking to me about forgiving people, walking in humility, and things like that, but I wanted Him to make me a good mom and help my kids to obey and be kind to each other. However, as you can probably guess, Jesus knew exactly what He was doing. Imagine that! Eventually, He helped me to understand that I didn't have to try to train, teach, and discipline my children as much as I thought I did. Instead, He taught me that if I let Him change my heart, their hearts would be affected and would change too. I learned, when I saw things I didn't like in my kids, to ask the Lord where that fault was in me. Sometimes I didn't really believe I had that problem, but He would always show me that I did, though it was present in a different form. As I submitted myself to His correction, gradually my children were healed as well. Jesus told me that each time I overcame in my life, I was building spiritual bridges for them to cross. It became easier for them to overcome in those areas because they were able to follow me.

If you are having trouble with your children, go to the Lord. He

will walk with you and show you what the real problem is. One of my daughters hated me, or it certainly seemed like she did. I didn't know what to do. It seemed like everything I did drove her farther away. The situation was getting very bad. She was disrespectful and disobedient, and she was challenging me just to see if she could rile me up and then wear me down to tears. There were times I would call my husband, Steve, crying and asking him to intervene. I prayed and asked the Lord to help me know how to reach her. One day, when I was praying about her, God told me that she would be my most difficult child, but that when she was grown, she would be my best friend. I can't tell you how I held on to that promise, because it sure didn't seem like it would ever happen!

Our confrontations always escalated to yelling matches. One day, when she was sassing me, I responded angrily, demanding that she obey. For a moment I noticed that she looked hurt, then we continued fighting like normal. Still, Jesus had opened a window and shown me that I was hurting her feelings. I came to realize that she wasn't thinking about what she was saying or the way she was saying it. She was

just responding out of her emotions. She didn't mean to act badly, but she was not able to control her tongue. With the Lord's help, I began to use a "not mad, but matter of fact" tone of voice to tell her she shouldn't talk to me that way, and then I would just walk away. This was hard for me at first. It felt wrong to just walk away and allow her to be openly disrespectful without correction, but I did it anyway. My walking away gave her a few minutes to think and to choose to respond the right way, and it kept me from hurting her feelings. Things slowly began to change. She would almost always come to me afterward and apologize for her responses, and then she began to trust me. Jesus healed our relationship completely. She forgave me for the times I had broken her heart, and I learned not to be offended, but to be patient and to believe in each of my children. Today, my daughter and I really are best friends, and it's nothing short of a miracle.

Parenting has more to do with who you are than what you do. So, let Jesus change your heart and help you build bridges for your children. He is a good Father and will be so faithful to walk with you through it all.

Lori McGraw, mother of six, is the local coordinator of Child Evangelism Fellowship of Collier County. She is also the wife of Pastor Steve McGraw, Children's Ministries Pastor. They have been attending NHM since 1990, and will soon celebrate the birth of their first grandchild.



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He Changes Everything

by Charissa McGraw

Sitting on my bed I just shook my head as thoughts raced through my mind: *You've wasted the whole day, focusing on things that don't matter. Now look where you are.* My parents stood nearby talking about evacuating, and it was all my fault that we hadn't taken the day to prepare.

It was Monday, September 4, and Hurricane Irma had turned into something we needed to be prepared for. I was only a little girl when Hurricane Wilma hit Naples in 2005, but I remembered it being horrible! A category five, wasn't it? However, that night I learned that all my childhood memories were exaggerated by an overactive child's imagination. Wilma had only been a category two when it hit us, which meant all my imagination about us being safe this time was just that: imagination.

I was terrified.

My parents left the room and I lay down my head. "Jesus why did you let me waste this whole day?" That's when He brought back the events of that morning. My family and I were all at the beach; the water had been so still and peaceful. My dad stood in waist-deep water and prayed for each one of us before baptizing us again. "It's a new season," I said as we started to walk away, and I had progressed through the day

with that mindset: it's a new season for our family, a new season of walking with the Lord.

Jesus whispered to my heart, "It's still a new season. Hunker down, everything will be okay." Peace washed over me. Those words were on constant repeat in my heart and mind as I went to sleep and woke up the next day

At work, all the guys were talking about the hurricane. I really had not wanted to go to work that day because I was convinced the Lord had said our family needed to stay home. With that being the case, I didn't want the fear that was on my coworkers to dampen my faith. When they all finally vacated the office, I sat alone praying. I still felt the Lord speaking words of peace to my heart. I was grounded in the fact that no matter how bad Irma was, the Lord was going to take care of me.

The first Bible story that came to my mind was of Naomi. There was a famine in Israel and Naomi's family decided to leave and go to Moab, a foreign nation (see Ruth 1:1–5). In Moab, Naomi's husband and two sons died. The Bible doesn't say specifically why they died, but this thought resonated with me: *They were God's chosen people, under His protection in Israel. Regardless of the circumstances, God was going to take care of them.*

However, they chose to leave the umbrella of protection provided by the Lord. This story just confirmed in my mind that we needed to choose to stay under the protection the Lord was offering to us. We had committed this new season to Him, putting ourselves under His protection and provision; we needed to stay in our home in Naples.

As I continued to pray, the Lord reminded me of Sodom and Gomorrah, specifically, the part where Abraham prayed that the Lord would be merciful (see Genesis 18:16–33). The Lord determined to show Abraham what He was about to do to the city, and Abraham pleaded with the Lord for the people’s lives. He finally got the number down to ten good people, and the Lord said He would not destroy the city if He found ten good people. I thought, *What if we are a part of the number of good people left behind that keeps the Lord from destroying our city?* This kept going through my mind a hundred miles an hour.

I was convinced. We needed to stay—regardless of what the media told us. Regardless of what people tried to tell us, we needed to stay. However, my parents seemed convinced that we should evacuate.

While on break later that day, I called my mom. This was our conversation:

Mom: “I’ve been telling people at church that they should evacuate because this storm is so bad, but every time I pray, I feel like we should stay.”

Me: “Me too!”

Mom: “The Lord brought to my remembrance Sodom and Gomorrah. I just keep thinking, what if we are a part of the number that keeps the Lord from destroying this city? What would happen if we leave?”

Me: “Me too!”

Mom: “What? No way! Then I was thinking about Naomi and her family. How they left during a hardship.”

Me: “Me too!”

Mom: “What?”

This is how the Lord chose to tell my parents the exact same thing He was telling me: “Hunker down, it’s all going to be okay.”



continued on page 18

He Changes Everything continued from page 17

Unfortunately, our extended family did not agree. Everyone told us to leave—everyone! My grandparents were livid with my mom because we were going to stay. We tried to explain it was because we were convinced this is what the Lord wanted us to do, but fear has a way of blinding people. People kept calling, almost every hour until the storm hit, trying to change our minds or giving us updates on Irma. Honestly, it was overwhelming.

There came a point where fear almost won; Irma wasn't changing course. Our house was prepared and we were prepared, but it was still scary. We had no idea what was going to happen.

I woke up Sunday morning, September 10, to the loudest crash I have ever heard. It came from our backyard, and I knew Irma was here. We lost electricity in the morning and sat in the dim light of candles and battery-operated lamps. I remember hearing things bounce off our roof. *Thud. Scrape. Crash.* We had no way of knowing what was going on outside, save one little hole in the shutter on the front window. Peeking through the hole, I watched the wind pull a tree all the way to the ground. The wind barreling down the street sounded like fifty cars rushing past our house in the rain. It was crazy.

Outside our home was chaos,

but inside there was so much peace.

My younger siblings didn't fight all day, which was a miracle. We played games together as a family, did devotions, and sang by the piano. I even took a nap. It was just peaceful. At the height of the storm, Mom and I lay in her bed and prayed. The wind was so loud it sounded like our house was going to rip apart. There was a constant thudding on our roof that sounded like giant feet stomping around. When I told this story after the storm, someone said, "That was Jesus on your roof," and I believe it! The sound was so boisterous and obnoxious, but then suddenly it stopped. I sat up in bed, "I think we are in the eye of the storm." When we looked through the peephole, it was completely calm outside. We



donned rain jackets and went outside to see the damage thus far. Other than a few trees down in our backyard, our home was virtually unaffected. It was a miracle.

My aunt texted us during this time and sent a picture of the storm. The eye was right over the top of us, with the promise of the other wall appearing in the next thirty minutes. When the back of the storm came, it wasn't like the front side of the storm. It seemed calmer. We stayed up late, praying together as a family while the winds outside seemed to die down. Now we just had to wait for the storm surge of nine to twelve feet of water.

But the surge never came.



In the two weeks that followed, I can't begin to tell how much the Lord helped and sustained us. He provided every need we had, and covered us with such protection.

At the age of eighteen, Charissa McGraw became a full-time missionary with Child Evangelism Fellowship in the Orlando area. She returned to Naples in 2015, and in 2017 felt led by the Holy Spirit to resign from CEF. She is a 2017 graduate of the New Hope School of Ministries. Charissa has a passion to encourage others in their Christian faith and relationship with the Lord.



He allowed us to be a blessing to people and do some very hard work outside (which was good for all of us, even though Alisha, my ten-year-old sister, hated it).

I was sitting on my bed this past Saturday thinking, *Everything has changed. I can see it. On the outside it might look like nothing is different, but inside our house will never be the same. There is a peace that is integral to our home; a sense of joy that doesn't seem to leave and a renewed spirit of generosity that delights in serving.* This was something only the Lord could do; He is the only one who could rip us out of our complacent state and show us that following Him day-by-day is better than anything we could do on our own. Everything He has allowed me to do and be a part of during this time has been so fulfilling.

There has been loss but, in the middle of it all, the Lord has moved. Each person you may talk to, whether they stayed or left, has a story of how the Lord provided for them. What should have destroyed us has only built our faith.

I believe that's because when the Lord comes, He changes everything.

Blessed to Be a Blessing

by Charissa McGraw

I wanted to do something—anything! But I felt the still small voice of the Lord tell me to sit and wait for Him. I have friends who live down in Everglades City and Chokoloskee. I had heard of the terrible destruction that had taken place, and I wanted desperately to be of help. Then Jesse Barrett called me from the church office.

“Charissa, do you know anyone who is going down to Everglades City today?” he said.

“No, why?” I asked.

“There are thirty-eight pairs of rubber boots and two black bags full of gloves that need to be delivered there.”

I wanted to raise my hand, as if in class, as I said, “I’ll take them!”

The next day I loaded up my tiny Yaris with all the boots. The inside of my car smelled like pure rubber as I drove down US 41, and I had to roll down both of my windows to get some ventilation. Before I left the church I had asked Jesse and others where I should take the donations. No one knew. “Maybe the center of

town, or the school,” someone suggested. I’m a planner at heart, so those directions didn’t satisfy me. But I decided to drive down without direction anyway.

As I pulled into Everglades City I prayed, “Lord, please bring me to the right person to drop off these boots.” I turned down the first road where I saw people. They looked “semi official,” so I pulled up to ask for directions.

“What can we do for you?” the officer asked.



I looked past him, and there on a pallet was one pair of boots. I looked up at him, “I have a donation of rubber boots and gloves.”

“You’ve come to the right place—right here!” he exclaimed.

Within minutes my car was unloaded and I shook the officer’s hand. They were so grateful because they were down to that last pair of boots. As I drove away my heart was so full as I thought of how the Lord took me directly to the place I needed to go. I was so blessed to be able to help, even in that small way.



I Spy

...a green worm, a brown snail and four flies. Two spiders, seven dragonflies, a frog, four ladybugs, two snakes and a turtle. Six bees, an ant carrying a watermelon slice, an ant carrying an orange, and four black and white flies.



What an Honor!

by Cynthia Giles

Pastor Grant has stated many times that *as believers we get to participate in the theocratic governing of the universe*. What an honor! Hurricane Irma was an opportunity to do just that. So, the participation began. Gulf Coast High School which went from housing twenty-three hundred high school students to being a shelter filled with over two thousand guests for three days. I am part of the GCHS administrative staff, and we, plus many volunteers, helped to situate families, elderly, people with special needs, single men and women, dogs, cats, and even a bird throughout the campus as their temporary shelter from Hurricane Irma. We utilized the gymnasium, band room, auditorium, and several classrooms where each guest was allowed a 5x8-foot space. Guests were free to walk around the campus when the weather permitted.

Besides registration, serving meals and meeting other basic needs of the guests, there were some stand out moments. One of those moments was the night my husband, Les, walked around the gymnasium speaking and praying

with people. He gave out the Charles Capps book, *God's Creative Power for Healing*. The next day, as I walked around the gym, I saw those books on many personal spaces.

One of my favorite locations to visit was the room with many of the elderly. We sang "Amazing Grace," and it was a ray of hope in a vulnerable time. There were some guests who were challenging. One guest, who had already experienced many losses in her life, was getting into arguments with her neighboring guests. She and I spent a lot of time together and she just wanted to talk. We talked about Jesus and her faith. After the storm she received some additional help for her needs. It was an overwhelming three days, yet I look back and think I could have participated more.

There are opportunities to minister to people every day and we should not wait for a physical storm to occur. We need to keep our eyes open to those who experience different types of storms daily. There are *always* ways to participate in the theocratic governing of the universe.



Cynthia Giles has been attending and serving at New Hope Ministries since 1999. She has been a guidance counselor in the Collier County School System since 1997. Cynthia is one of several teachers of the NHM healing class. Each Saturday, she visits the Collier County jail to minister to the young women who are incarcerated, bringing them the message of faith, hope and love in Jesus.

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Dear Irma,

You stole our electrical power, but we empowered each other. You stole our water but we showered each other with kindness and drank in the love of friends and neighbors. You stole our gasoline but we fueled each other with encouragement. You made us evacuate our houses but we learned that as long as we're with family, we're always "home." You stole our electronics and social media but we bonded in a way we've not bonded since the invention of electronics and social media. Irma, you may have stolen the things that make our days a little easier, a little cooler and a little more comfortable, but you can never steal our spirit, our perseverance, our sense of community or our willingness to come together when you tried your hardest to tear us apart. Sorry Irma, you lose!

*Sincerely, Florida
-author unknown*

Chokoloskee Perspective

As a Contract Inspection Specialist with the South Florida Water Management District, work kept me extremely busy in the initial days following Hurricane Irma. September 15 was my first full day at home down on Chokoloskee. I took the shutters off and did a lot of chainsaw work cutting trees that fell or broke off. Thankfully there was no flooding to our house, just minor damage. Our floor is thirteen feet above sea level, and the storm surge water mark at our home measured around eleven-feet, so the house was spared.

My workshops, on the other hand, had around four and a half feet of water inside, so all my tools were baptized. The yard will take weeks to clean up, but my family is safe, and that's what is important.

*-Matt VanLeeuwen
NHM choir
and band member*

Business Feature

The Sauce Lady



Ela Vivonetto, a/k/a The Sauce Lady, is a second generation

Vivonetto from the famous Vivonetto's Restaurant in Naples. Her family's recipes have been handed down for generations, and you can really taste the difference. For years people have traveled from all over Collier and Lee counties to The Sauce Lady's north Naples location at 9331 Tamiami Trail North to stock up on take-home sauces, entrees, and lasagna. In March of 2017, Ela opened a second location, Sauce Lady Buffet, located in Berkshire Commons at the corner of Radio Road and Santa Barbara Boulevard. There she serves a wide selection of Italian food in a cafeteria-style setting.

During Hurricane Irma, the north Naples location sustained extensive roof damage, causing damage to equipment and the loss of all inventory and food preparation supplies. This is where Ela prepares all of the food for both locations. Therefore, both The Sauce Lady and Sauce Lady Buffet were closed for an extended period of time.

Many would expect that Ela would be crushed, devastated, and asking, "Where is God in

all of this mess?" Not Ela. Her faith is strong.

The Sauce Lady said, "I found out I have a really good insurance plan, and it's going to cover all of the inventory, damage, and lost income. I really needed a break from the business to just rest, and it's been great. I don't have the hole in the roof patched, but I'm getting estimates. I'm not worried. It's in God's hands; He has everything under control."

Ela plans to reopen both locations on Monday, October 23. At that time, The Sauce Lady will resume making approximately fifty different entrees, including four different lasagnas, ravioli, manicotti, eggplant parmigiana, chicken cacciatore, chili, pot roast, stuffed peppers, shells and cabbage. Soup choices will include minestrone, pasta fagioli, lentil, split pea, lobster bisque, butternut squash, mushroom beef barley, Italian wedding, and chicken noodle.

Ela says, "Everything is made from scratch and you taste the difference – the authentic homemade flavor."

Although Ela enjoyed her much needed break, she is ready to get back to serving her customers.



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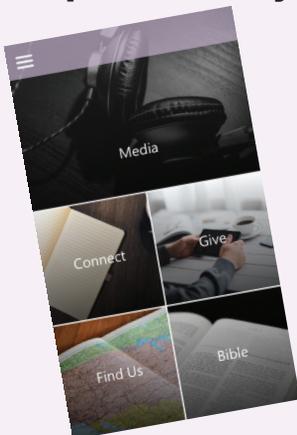


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FOOD PANTRY

Tuesdays and Thursdays

9:30am to noon

Event Center lobby

Each week an average of one hundred people visit New Hope Ministries to receive help from the food pantry. It is available to any person/family in need of assistance, whether for just a while or on a long-term basis.

Non-perishable foods such as beans, rice, and cereal are available, along with canned meats, fruits and vegetables. These foods are provided to the food pantry by Harry Chapin, Midwest of Ft. Myers, and Meals of Hope, along with donations from the congregation of NHM.

Occasionally there is fresh or frozen meat, or fresh fruit and vegetables, and St. Matthews House provides bread when they have a surplus supply.

Following Hurricane Irma, the food pantry was utilized to assist families who had lost wages or suffered damage to their homes.

In addition to the food pantry,

NHM has a fully operational commercial kitchen under the direction of Executive Chef Brian Elwell. Each Wednesday, dinner is available from 4:30 to 6:15pm. The cost is \$7.00 per person over the age of ten. The meal includes soup, salad, entree, dessert, and iced tea. Be sure to arrive early during "season" as the winter residents and visitors to Naples enjoy coming for dinner.

Pastor Grant and the other pastors and leaders at NHM want the church to be a blessing to our community by using the kitchen as a way to reach out locally.

On Wednesday, September 20, 2017, NHM hosted Senator Marco Rubio's staff and a team of FEMA representatives. Chef Brian, along with NHM staff and volunteers, prepared free hot meals (lunch and dinner) for more than eleven-hundred people. On the next page are a few photos taken that day.



New at NHM

by Sara Sapienza

How excited I was when I was offered a position at New Hope Ministries as Director of Christian Education and Volunteerism. A few weeks after starting my new position I said to myself, “How am I ever going to get to know the people quick enough to do my job properly?” But God!

I began to develop relationships one person at a time. The people at NHM embraced me with loving tenderness. My husband, Nick, and I were also new to Naples and I missed my home in New Jersey.

Two years later I still love my job and love my new church family. God is good and I am so grateful to be a part of the NHM family. The Lord is faithful. When He calls, He gives exactly what is needed to accomplish all that is expected and more. Yes, there will always be challenges and a learning curve, however, He is right there and will put solid people in our paths to mentor and encourage us. When we submit to Him, He will direct our steps. (See Philippians 4:19, Proverbs 3:5-6. Psalm 37:23, Jeremiah 29:11.)

In 2016, the Christian Education Department offered various new classes with seasoned teachers on Sunday mornings. After an evaluation of the program, we found the attendance was lower than we had hoped for, considering the large number of people

who worship at NHM.

We conducted a survey at the end of 2016, in which forty percent of the worshippers participated. Thirty percent of those surveyed requested having small groups, and expressed a desire to connect more with each other. The survey also revealed that a good number of our worshippers wanted to attend classes but could not because they were serving on Sundays. Some worshippers could not attend because they would have to leave their children in nursery or class for two services, while they would attend one service and attend class during the other service.

Through researching what other churches were doing, we discovered that many of them focus primarily on small group settings, no matter what type of groups are offered.

Our objective is to help our attendees connect more with each other and learn how to serve the Lord as a lifestyle. So, here are a few of the new initiatives we are offering, which we believe will support what our worshippers have requested:

NEXTSTEPS

- **NextSteps:** A class offered every Sunday at 11:00am in Room 211 where new people can get connected and learn

about our church. This is also the class for learning how to serve at NHM. This class will be offered on Wednesday evenings, as the need arises.



- **Life Groups:** These are small groups that will meet at various times of the week with different topics, venues, and facilitators. There will be Bible studies, support groups, discipleship classes, outreach projects; some will be more activity oriented. The length of the classes will be from four weeks to an ongoing group, depending on the topic and the leader. We offer

training for becoming a life group leader. Those who are interested in becoming a leader may sign up at newhopenaples.com.

The launch of Life Groups will be in January on Monday nights with "Health and Wellness." This is being offered as a family experience with the concession stand open from 5:30-7:00pm. The groups will meet from 7:00-8:30pm. The first week of January, we will offer a free salad bar to support healthy living and the launch of our new program. There will be activities and child-care for children of all ages.

We will be adding new groups each month, so check out the website for new topics and groups as we launch them.



Sara Sapienza and her husband, Nick, moved from New Jersey to Naples in 2014. They discovered New Hope Ministries and began attending shortly after the move. She loves to encourage and help people connect with one another and utilizes that passion in her staff position at NHM.

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First Love

by Melanie Murphy



As a believer in Jesus Christ, it is natural to look at the completed work of the cross and to marvel at His grace. What does not come as naturally is to *put into practice* the selflessness that Jesus modeled, as He loved others above himself to the point of giving His own life. One of the greatest ways to actively reflect the gospel is through obedience to the scriptures regarding God's great design for marriage. In Ephesians 5:25-27, the call of every husband is to love his wife *just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.*

The primary purpose of marriage is not to fulfill our own ideas of romance or to find completion from another person; rather, marriage should demonstrate sacrificial love that encourages holiness through a growing relationship with the Lord. This transformative process yields present and future rewards. Others should see Jesus in us as we love and serve our spouses.

Michael and I have been married for twenty-seven years. We were just eighteen and nineteen

back then, and I'm not sure that we were thinking about our holiness before the Lord at those ages. We were simply in love and believed that since we both loved Jesus we were all set. Thankfully, God's mercies were new for us every morning. We were not always faithful to chase after the Lord and set our minds on things above. In fact, we were often impulsive when making plans and looked to our own best interest in just about every situation. God's constant love for us through admonishment, rebuke, tenderness, and forgiveness has been working itself out in us through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

Recently, God has put it on our hearts to share life with other married couples who also seek to glorify the Lord within the marriage covenant. *First Love* will be a place where we laugh and learn and study the scriptures with others as we endeavor to answer the call of Christian discipleship in the church. It may not be by coincidence that Paul writes to the Ephesians about the mystery of marriage, and the very next chapter reminds us that it will take wearing the full armor of God to withstand the fight we face as believers. We must be warriors for the kingdom in marriage and in

life. Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock (Matthew 7:24-25).

God desires for His people to

have strong marriages, and He has given Christ's example of sacrificial service as the sure foundation for every marriage. We can have confidence then, that as we practice sacrificial love in our homes, the end result will be a marriage that strengthens us and glorifies God.

Melanie Murphy was born and raised in Naples. She has attended New Hope Ministries since she was a child. Melanie and Michael attended youth group, married, and dedicated their three children, Mallory, Hayley, and Michael at NHM. Melanie is a middle school secretary for the Collier County School System.



First Love leaders are Michael and Melanie Murphy and Kempton and Marlo Rimes. The group meets in the Event Center, Room 207, on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8:00pm. There is also a fellowship night on the last Friday of each month.

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