



HOPE CHURCH

"...A living hope..." | Peter 1:3

Hope Church News

Volume 56, No. 3

March 2013

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Daylight Savings Begins
Saturday, March 9
Don't forget to turn your
clocks ahead one hour!

Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday
9:00am - 5:00pm
Friday Closed

Hope Church, RCA
77 West 11th Street
Holland, MI 49423
(616) 392-7947
www.hopechurchrca.org

The Season of Lent at Hope Church



Artwork by Kari Miller-Fennwood, please see artist's statement on page 2

Healing Prayer Service Sunday, March 3, 10:00 a.m.

Lenten Prayer Cross:

Share Each Other's Burdens

On Sunday, February 24th, people had the opportunity to write down prayer concerns on a card. During the Healing Prayer Service we will pray for the concerns that have been shared and then distribute those crosses to be taken home. People will be encouraged to lift up these concerns in their prayer life until Easter day. Watch for this opportunity from the Health Ministry and the Worship, Prayer and Spirituality Ministry to share each other's burdens.

Wednesday Worship Services March 6 & 13, 7:00 p.m.

Each worship service will incorporate Taizé style music and prayer, candlelight, scripture, silent meditation, and communion. Each evening a member will share a brief meditation on the Psalm of the week.

Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 24

Palm Sunday Celebration

8:30 a.m. Early Worship

11:00 a.m. Worship

We begin the journey through Holy Week with a Palm Sunday processional, liturgy, preaching, and song. All choirs will be singing including the Joy Singers and Jubilate Choir.

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, March 28

6:00 p.m. Seder Dinner

7:45 p.m. Tenebrae Service

This traditional Jewish meal remembers the events of the Passover told in the book of Exodus. There will be a pot luck meal as part of the Seder so please bring a dish to pass. Sign up for the Seder by calling the church office, (616) 392-7947, or by signing up in the Gathering Area. A Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service of prayer, scripture, and communion will follow the Seder Dinner.

Season of Lent continued on page 2

The Season of Lent at Hope Church

Continued from page 1

Good Friday Service

Friday, March 29, 12:10pm

Third Reformed Church

A community Good Friday Service for the Washington School Neighborhood is being hosted by Third Reformed Church, First United Methodist Church and Hope Church. This service of prayer, scripture, and song will be based on the Seven Last Sayings of Jesus from the cross. All are welcome!

Easter Vigil

Saturday, March 30, 8:00 p.m.

Come and experience the blessing of holding a Vigil as we approach the celebration of Easter.

Easter Sunday

Sunday, March 31

8:30 a.m. Early Worship Service

9:40 a.m. Easter Brunch

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Celebrate the risen Lord with Gordon Wiersma preaching, and Jill Russell, liturgist.

The music will be under the direction of Brian Carder. Church School will not be held on Easter Sunday.

Artist's Statement

Provisions for the Journey

The paintings for Lent were made after careful consideration of the lectionary text which began with our Worship, Prayer and Spirituality Ministry workshop for Lent. As a group we found a phrase, an over-riding principle or thought running through the text that caught our attention. I took these words or phrases and studied the text further, and began making drawings that I felt reflected or captured the ideas in the text. I do this often when I am thinking through God's word. I have journals full of drawings and notes based on scripture. I believe I see God's intentions more clearly through images.

From this point, I went further into boiling down the essence of the text from the drawings. I wanted the paintings to be devoid of "real" references and be distilled into a spiritual image filled with color. I see the power of God revealed best in these clouds of color.

-Kari Miller-Fennwood

Adult Education

Jonah, The Reluctant and Rebellious Missionary's Dialogue with God

Presenter: Led by Marlin Vander Wilt, with participants: Rick Smith, Curtis Gruenler and Jon Jerow presenting the serio-comedy, "It Should Happen To A Dog," written by Wolf Mankowitz.

Series Summary: Contrary to common belief, the Old Testament Book is not about a whale. It is about a reconciling God, a selfish man and a wicked city. It is an astounding parable about God's unlimited grace and love which infuriates those of us who think we have earned it. During the last part of Lent, we will be exploring this little book. We will open our eyes and hearts to see and get to know the God who is concerned about all persons and living creatures. We are called to share that love of God with all, even those we do not like but must learn to love.

Jonah | Sundays | 9:40am | Room 106

- March 10 "Well, ---- No, I Won't Go!"
- March 17 "You Guys are Going to Fry! I Can't Wait!"
- March 24 "I Told You So! Are You A Wimp or Is It Grace?"

Adult Education continued

Health Ministry Series: *Becoming Aware of...*

“Becoming Aware” is our Health Ministry theme and ardent purpose as we continue with the second half of our Christian Education series. To “become aware” means to know, to be informed of, to be alert to be on guard against. “Becoming Aware” chases ignorance and illusion, creates effort and action, and boosts hope and togetherness.



Becoming Aware of... | Sundays | 9:40am | Commons

March 10

“Becoming Aware of Anxiety” with Dr. Jim Dumerauf

Dr. Jim Dumerauf is the Medical Director of the Behavioral Health Services in Holland Hospital and the Chair of the Physicians Health Committee there. Jim is also an Assistant Clinical Professor at Michigan State University.

Anxiety is a universal part of the human experience, and is often a useful signal to a situation which requires our attention. Severe anxiety can be a source of significant distress and even disability. The common anxiety disorders (panic disorder, phobia, PTSD, general anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorder) will be briefly reviewed, along with biblical references that will reflect that those are not new or limited to modern times, and that there is hope and help for those who suffer.

March 17

“Becoming Aware of Depression” with Thomas Mullens

Thomas Mullens is a therapist at Ottagan Addiction Recovery (OAR), serving as the Outpatient Clinical Director of the Grand Haven branch. He has a Masters degree in Clinical Social Work and is a Certified Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor.

Depression is more than just ‘feeling sad’ or ‘having the blues’; but how do we distinguish actual depression from occasional sadness? Where does it come from and how do we treat it? Every year we learn a little bit more about this debilitating disease and surprisingly, anti-depressant medication may not be the best treatment option.

March 24

“Becoming Aware of Alzheimer’s” with Donita Robards

Donita Robards, Hope Church nurse, is a Psychiatric Registered Nurse, currently working as a Case Manager with Resthaven At Home, in Holland, MI. Donita has nineteen years of experience in nursing, with developed expertise in Psychiatric Medical/Surgical, in-patient residential and Home Health care.

There are over 70 types of dementia. Alzheimer’s is just one type of dementia. It is a degenerative, progressive neuropsychiatric disorder. We will be discussing how Alzheimer’s affects cognition, behavior, emotions, physical and functional abilities. The goal is to learn the stages of Alzheimer’s as well as interventions to promote physical safety, emotional well-being, and socialization. We will also briefly discuss prevention of caregiver burnout.

Consistory Corner

The following Motions were passed at the February 11, 2013 Consistory Meeting:

- To accept the recommendation from Executive Committee to re-align staff job duties to insure coverage for Sunday mornings
- To authorize Personnel to make such changes deemed necessary to insure job duty coverage
- To continue the pattern of the Summer Preaching Schedule for 2013
- To accept recommendation from Executive Committee to provide oversight and fiduciary functions for the ministry of Randy Smit, Compassionate Connections

Personnel Report: Staff Changes

Beginning in March, there will be some changes in how Hope Church utilizes its staff for administrative support. With the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, the Consistory approved these changes at its February meeting. As these changes are implemented, some will be more visible than others, so here is a summary to update the congregation on the new staff configuration:

Church Administrator: the main substance of the Church Administrator role continues, with a few important changes

Laurie Braaksma will continue her role as the Church Administrator, but she will shift from her current full-time 40 hours to a 32 hour position. Laurie will continue with her current weekday hours of Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., but Laurie will discontinue regular availability for administrative support from Friday through Sunday, including no longer being the administrative support person for Sunday. Laurie will continue to be available for periodic evening and weekend administrative support for various events such as funerals, large program events, and certain ministry meetings.

Communications Coordinator: this is an expanding of the current Communications Coordinator position

Angie Griffore started in the new Communications Coordinator position last November, and her role will be expanded to include additional coverage of office and administrative responsibilities. Angie will also be available for tasks such as bulletin preparation, building management, care group communication, and event scheduling. In this way Angie will also be able to provide effective coverage when Laurie is away.

Sunday Administrative Support: a new position created specifically for Sunday support

A member of the congregation will be hired to provide office coverage on Sunday mornings from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. This person will be in the office on Sunday to help coordinate logistics for worship and programs and to respond to questions and needs from the congregation.

In developing and approving this plan, Personnel and Consistory believe it is an effective way to utilize our gifted staff to provide good support to the congregation, staff and Pastors. Shared knowledge and responsibility for administrative tasks promises to be both a wise day-to-day and long-term model, and the new Sunday Administrative Support will be a helpful resource for all. The overall cost for this staffing plan is a modest reduction in the personnel budget. These changes will begin at the start of March, so look for the new Sunday Administrative Support person to be on the job Sunday, March 3! Please contact Leanne VanDyk, Chair of Personnel, or one of the Pastors with any feedback or questions you may have.



January & February Update

During the month of January, your Neighborhood Connectors, Shannon MacKay, and I, Catie Hauch, spent our time working with two neighbors in need of home maintenance. The first is a woman living on 10th Street who recently lost her husband. Her home is in need of new windows, along with many other interior repairs. Shannon has been working with the City to navigate through all of the Historic District rules and to help this neighbor with financial assistance.

We've also been working with two gentlemen in their 70's living in a home on 9th Street. They desperately need assistance with cleaning and removing large quantities of things they have accumulated. They are veterans, and one is wheelchair-bound and unable to move freely about his home. They suffered the loss of a third family member who was living in the home and are working through their grief. Evergreen Commons has been providing case management and we are working with neighbors to provide physical goods (paint, twin beds, curtains, sheets, etc.), as well as manpower to remove objects from their home.

Hope Church and Neighborhood Connections also held a joint training workshop on Asset Based Community Development and showed a film about poverty, with discussion afterward. Both events were well attended and participants were able to engage with one another on issues regarding poverty, community development in their own neighborhoods, and what it means to be a church that does activities *with* a neighborhood instead of *for* a neighborhood.

How you can get involved:

If you would like to meet neighbors in need and help on either of the housing projects listed above, please contact Shannon MacKay, your Neighborhood Connector. Both situations could use some loving support to get these families through tough times. Thank you!

10th Street Community Housing Partnership Update

It's been awhile since we've called on the congregation for the 10th Street house, but the Mentor Team wants to alert you of a couple of needs:

Upstairs apartment

A new family has moved in recently, and they are in need of some dining-room style chairs. If you have some chairs available, please notify the church office. (That's the simple one!)

Downstairs apartment

The apartment is in need of some renovation and cleanup to prepare for the next family:

1. A painting crew is needed to paint several rooms
2. A cleaning crew is needed for a clean-up day: installing blinds, general sprucing up, etc.

We are unsure of the timing, but if you are interested in helping out on these projects, please contact the church office at (616) 392-7947.

Thanks much!

– 10th Street Mentor Team: Vern Boersma; Marilee Nieuwsma; Kristine Bradfield; Alison Davelaar; Gordon Wiersma

Youth Ministry

Our youth will be joining Grace Episcopal Church youth for a “move-a-thon” on Sunday, March 3. We will be raising money to support Hope College’s Dance Marathon, which raises money each year for DeVos Children’s Hospital. We will spend six hours in continuous motion, playing games and enjoying a walking lunch, along with attending Sunday school and worshipping with the Grace community.

High Hopes

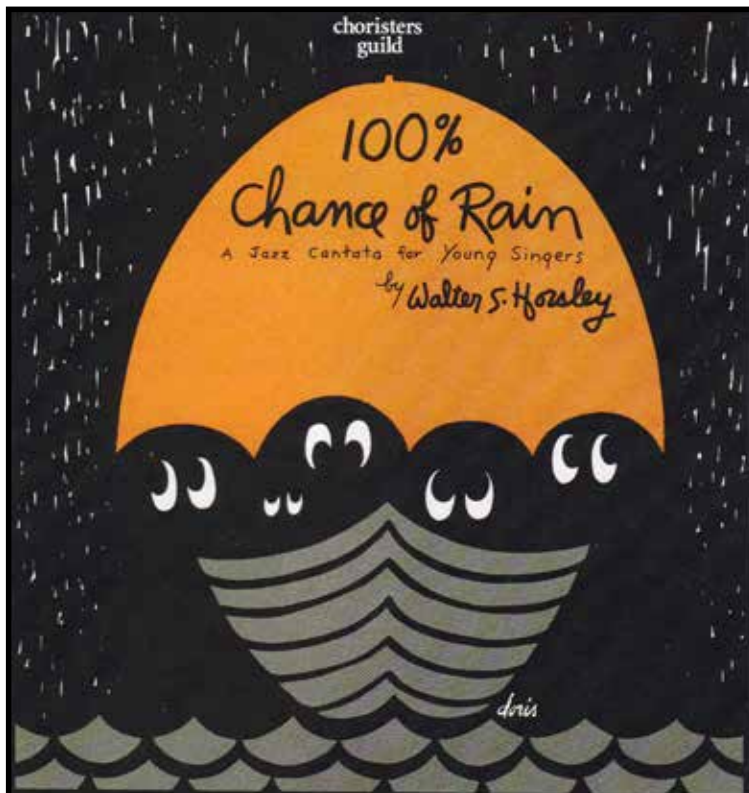
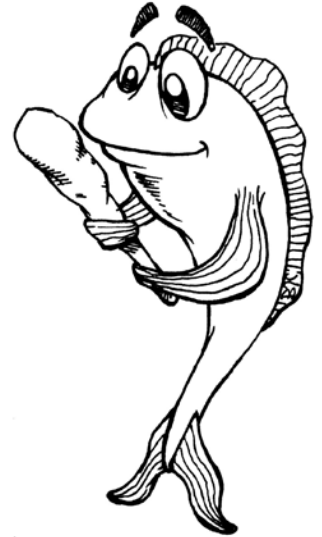
We are looking forward to preparing enough food to feed 200 people for the Community Kitchen this month. We will also be meeting for an “Unplugged” meeting, where we connect through conversation, games, devotions and communion. The third Sunday of the month is always reserved for “Unshowered”. We meet at 9:45 a.m. for some breakfast and Bible study. A very popular event is our “Lock-in”, scheduled for Friday, March 22. We will go bowling, eat, play, sing, watch a movie, have devotions, and hopefully get some sleep!

Fish Club

One of our annual rituals in Fish Club is to meet and put together “College Care Packages”. We will be meeting on Sunday evening, March 24. Each year we gather things that our college age students might need or just have fun with.

We also like to include some food items. If anyone would like to donate anything for the packages, please drop them off at the office before March 24.

We have 26 packages to put together. All of our college students have fond memories of doing this as fish clubbers, and they really appreciate the packages and cards.



Jubilate Choir

Jubilate Choir Prepares the Musical, *100% Chance of Rain*

Jubilate Choir (grades 2-7) is now in rehearsal for their spring musical, *100% Chance of Rain*, by Walter Horsley. This popular musical tells the story of Noah, with songs on why God chose Noah, why God had to flood the earth, and why God said the destruction was God’s wonderful promise.

The musical presentation will be on **Sunday, April 28th** following Pizza Sunday lunch. Mark your calendars for this great production as the choir will not only sing the story, Noah and the full cast will build an ark and rally the animals.

Singers, please note the rehearsal schedule:

Sunday March 3, 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 10, 12:30-2:00 p.m. (*lunch will be provided for the singers*)

Sunday, March 17, 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 24, 12:30-2:00 p.m. (*lunch will be provided for the singers*)

We have lots to learn! Students are encourage to join the choir and attend as many rehearsals as possible.



Members of the Hope Church Kids Hope Team enjoy a meal together at the annual Appreciation Dinner on Wednesday, February 22nd.

Annual Appreciation Dinner

On Wednesday evening, February 6th, twenty-two of our mentors, substitute mentors, and prayer partners met for our annual Appreciation Dinner. We enjoyed a meal together and shared stories of encouragement, struggles, and joy. As a Kids Hope team, we often pass each other in the halls of Vanderbilt School, or exchange e-mails, but rarely have time to meet as a group, so this is always an affirming time for us. It's amazing how the time flies, but we only have two months left of mentoring this school year. We look forward to spending time with our students and seeing growth in our relationships with them.

Caring for Creation

The Caring for Creation Ministry is planning several events for this year. More details will be coming as the event dates arrive. Here are some to look forward to:

- Spring Wildflower Walk
- Ottawa County Parks Tour
- The Great Hope Church Home Energy Challenge
- Electronic Waste Recycling (May 18, 2013)

We hope this list piques your interest; but for now, hold that thought...

Climate Change Event

Thinking Local: How Will Climate Change Impact the Great Lakes Area?

Monday, March 4, 7:00 p.m.

Winants Auditorium, Hope College

The event is free and open to the public. No advance registration is required. The event is hosted by the League of Women Voters and co-hosted by the Hope College Department of Biology, Geology, Environmental Studies, and Sustainability Advisory Committee.

SoulPlay Returns

Coming soon - another *SoulPlay* event brought to you by the Worship, Prayer and Spirituality Ministry on **Sunday, March 10th, 3:00-5:00 p.m.**

SoulPlay provides a means to connect with others and stimulate energy, joy and imagination through intergenerational exercises that explore a balance of energetic and reflective expressions.

In January 2012, we hosted a two-hour session of *SoulPlay* which was attended by about twenty brave explorers. We aimed that event toward an adult group by design, as a way to introduce what it's all about, before extending an invitation that includes a wider range of ages.

This year the invitation includes ages eight and up. Childcare/activities in the youth room are being planned and will be available for children younger than age eight. Please notify the office if you wish to attend with children younger than eight.

Taizé Services

Taizé services will not be held during the month of March. Services will resume on Wednesday, April 3.

March Birthdays

- 05 Marjorie French
Care Group: 5
- 06 Barbara Bingham
Care Group: 1
- 10 Joanne Brooks
Care Group: 12
- 16 Duncan McCune
Care Group: 5
- 17 Bette Williams
Care Group: 3
- 18 Ruth Vrieling
Care Group: 4
- 18 Jim Hinkamp
Care Group 5

If you are 75+ years old and would like to be listed in the birthday column, please contact the church office at (616) 392-7947 or office@hopechurchca.org

Hope Church Readers

Hope Church Readers will meet on Wednesday, March 20th, at 1:00 p.m. in the Commons to discuss Eric Segal's, *Acts of Faith*. Leading the discussion will be Joan Wenke. Come join in a lively afternoon of ideas and friendship.

Ringling and Singing

Have you considered joining the choirs at Hope Church? The Chancel Choir (adult) and Carillon Choir (handbells for adults) are open to new members at any time.

During the season of Lent, the choirs are learning music for Lent, Easter, and Eastertide festival Sundays. What a great time to come to a rehearsal and learn more about participating in one or both choirs.

If you need additional info, please ask a choir member or director, Brian Carder, or Rhonda Edgington.

Pizza Sunday Hosts Needed

Hosts are needed for 2013! This is a simple task that can be done by a couple of friends or as a family. Instructions are provided and easy to follow. You can also support Pizza Sunday by signing up to provide salad. You do not have to pay for supplies, you simply need to go to Gordon Foods and pick up salad. Please consider signing up to host or supply salads for a Pizza Sunday!

There will be no Pizza Sunday in March. Everyone is encouraged to attend the Easter Brunch, on Sunday, March 31st at 9:40 a.m. in the Commons. The next Pizza Sunday will be Sunday, April 28th.

Hope Church Gardeners Spring Clean-up

Let's get started and make our garden look its best! The city of Holland curbside pick-up of clippings, small branches, etc., is Saturday, March 23rd through Saturday, April 6th. Please have your section cleaned up and ready for spring before that time.

Help is needed in preparing the church gardens, so call David VanHeest if you are interested or have questions. Many hands are needed!

Thank You, Walk for Warmth Supporters

Many thanks to the Hope Church representation at the Walk for Warmth on February 9th, and to those who are generously supporting the Walk. It was a cold but sunny day, and it seemed very good to respond to people in difficult financial situations who are unable to pay utility bills. Thanks again to all.
-Norma Killilea

Holland is Ready Meeting

Monday, March 4th
7:00 p.m.
Grace Episcopal Church
555 Michigan Avenue
Holland, MI 49423



Dr. James V. Brownson will discuss his new book, *Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships*. Dr. Brownson is the James and Jean Cook Professor of New Testament Studies at Holland's very own Western Theological Seminary. Eerdmann Publishing describes Dr. Brownson's book as one that,

"argues that Christians should reconsider whether or not the biblical strictures against same-sex relations as defined in the ancient world should apply to contemporary, committed same-sex relationships...Brownson's in-depth study will prove a useful resource for Christians who want to form a considered opinion on this important issue."

Dr. Brownson's book is available for purchase at:

- Eerdmann's Publishing (www.eerdmans.com)
- Amazon.com
- Reader's World in Holland (194 S River Ave, Holland, MI 49423)
- and any book seller of your choice

This event is free and open to the public. Please attend and bring friends, loved ones, and anyone who values civil, meaningful dialogue!

Racial Equity Institute

A two-day Racial Equity Institute will take place on Thursday and Friday March 7 and 8, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The event will be an educational and interactive program of "learning, sharing, and processing through a racially diverse group" using facilitated dialogues and activities to examine the "internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels of racial equity."

The cost is \$130 per person, which includes a light breakfast, lunch, and refreshments. Financial hardship scholarships are available by request. Register online at www.ethnicdiversity.org or please call (616) 846-9074.

This event is sponsored by the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance, at Grand Valley State University Meijer Campus, 515 South Waverly, Holland.

Circles

1

Wednesday, March 6, 9:30am
 at Maribelle Anderson's

2

Wednesday, March 6, 9:30am
 at Suzanne Buteyn's

4

Wednesday, March 13, 7:45pm
 at Hope Church

At Home With the Word

Daily Bible Readings from the Revised Common Lectionary

February 25-March 3

Monday Isaiah 55:1-5
 Tuesday Isaiah 55:6-9
 Wednesday Psalm 63:1-8
 Thursday I Corinthians 10:1-13
 Friday Luke 13:1-5
 Saturday Luke 13:6-9
 Sunday Third Sunday in Lent

March 4-10

Monday Joshua 5:9-12
 Tuesday Psalm 32:1-5
 Wednesday Psalm 32:6-11
 Thursday 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
 Friday Luke 15:1-3, 11-24
 Saturday Luke 15:25-32
 Sunday Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 11-17

Monday Isaiah 43:16-21
 Tuesday Psalm 126:1-3
 Wednesday Psalm 126:4-6
 Thursday Philippians 3:4-11
 Friday Philippians 3:12-14
 Saturday John 12:1-8
 Sunday Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 18-24

Monday Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
 Tuesday Mark 11:1-11
 Wednesday Isaiah 50:4-9
 Thursday Psalm 31:9-16
 Friday Philippians 2:5-11
 Saturday Mark 14:1-15:47
 Sunday Palm/Passion Sunday

March 25-31

Monday Acts 10:34-43
 Tuesday Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
 Wednesday 1 Corinthians 15:19-26
 Thursday Maundy Thursday; Exodus 12:1-14
 Friday Good Friday; John 18-19
 Saturday John 20:1-18
 Sunday Easter Sunday

Thank You

Dear Hope Church,

On March 18 I will turn 92 years old! That's right, I was born March 18, 1921! I am still quite well. I walk a lot, read, and participate in activities here in Edmond Mansions, a retirement home near my children in Edmond, Oklahoma. My daughter, Vicki, lives in Oklahoma City and watches over me. I can't travel very well anymore. Keep sending the Hope Church News, please!

*With much love,
 Ruth Vrieling*

Dear Hope Church,

Oh my goodness! What a celebration of my 100th birthday with cards, flowers and lunches - so much fun! My sincere thanks to Hope Church friends who helped make it such a happy occasion.

Wow. The birthday celebration at Hope Church Commons was awesome, a beautiful cake with 100 lit candles and other goodies, a complete surprise!

To my daughter, Peggy Jean Di Mauro, and those who worked with her, I give my love and sincere thanks. And thank you, guests, for making that day so memorable.

~Dorothy Robinson

Did you notice the little blurb in last month's HCNews? - 'Pastor Gordon Wiersma will be on Sabbatical in the Fall of 2013' That is indeed the plan, and I wanted to share some details with you since next Fall is not too far away! This July will mark 14 years for me serving as a Pastor at Hope Church, and this will be my second sabbatical time as a pastor here. The Consistory approved a sabbatical policy in 1999 which established that ministers are eligible for sabbatical every 7th year. As a pastor I am deeply grateful for this time offered by the congregation and aware of the privilege it is to have such an opportunity.

The time frame I am planning on is to be gone from August through just before Thanksgiving in November. I will take my vacation as a block in August and then be on sabbatical from September through November. One of the wonderful parts of this timing is that my wife, Anne Heath Wiersma, will also be on sabbatical during the Fall. In January Anne was granted tenure from Hope College where she is an Art History professor, so this will be her first sabbatical as part of the Hope College faculty. We're very grateful to have our sabbatical times coinciding and looking forward to a refreshing change of pace as a family. In August we plan to vacation mainly out East, visiting family and friends all the way from Maine to Tennessee. During my last sabbatical I received a substantial grant from the Lilly Endowment that provided the means for me to travel extensively in Western Europe, Western Asia, and Israel/Palestine/Sinai. Those were fabulous experiences, and those journeys have continued to be formative for me. However, for this sabbatical my travel plans are much less ambitious (although Anne plans to do a research trip to France in the Fall, and I as a dutiful husband have volunteered to accompany her ☺), but I have some specific plans in place that I am eager to pursue:

- **Reading:** I plan to focus much of my reading on the work of contemporary theologian James Alison. I have become familiar with the work of Alison in recent years, mainly through my interest in nonviolent atonement theology based on the 'mimetic theory' work of Rene Girard as well as the non-violent theology work of Walter Wink. Some of you attended a lecture by James Alison when he spoke at Hope Church in early 2010, and hearing him in person greatly piqued my already growing interest in his writing. Alison's theology delves into atonement with an emphasis on the power of self-giving love and the victory of life, rather than cycles of retribution and punishment. In addition to Alison's books there is also a newly developed course based on James Alison's writings that I hope to pursue. Along with some other theology reading, I also plan to do some reading of novels and poetry, and plan to get the Sunday New York Times!
- **Learning Spanish:** That is, I plan to begin to learn Spanish, as I have no illusions about mastering the language in 3 months! I have long wanted to learn Spanish as a way of connecting with neighbors and community, and I will use my sabbatical as a starting point to do so. I am planning to use one of the Spanish learning systems such as Rosetta Stone or Pimsleur, and I'd be interested to hear from anyone about their experiences, good or bad, with these or other programs (and if you own one and would be open to my using it, I'd be glad to hear from you as well). I'll also be looking for some conversation partners to help guide me slowly along the language way.

For the sabbatical time, the Personnel Committee is developing a plan to offer additional support to Pastor Jill and our staff and leadership during my absence. One aspect of this is that Rev. Dr. Lynn Japinga (Hope Church member, Hope College Religion Professor, RCA Minister) will join Pastor Jill in worship leadership and preaching for the Fall. Lynn has served in this role previously during sabbatical and family leave times and we are grateful for her willingness to again provide her gifted leadership.

I expect to have many more opportunities before and following my sabbatical to express my gratitude, but I can't say enough how grateful I am for this opportunity. I am very blessed to have served Hope Church for these first 14 years, and I trust that the sabbatical time will be a refreshment and resource to help me in serving faithfully in the years ahead. But, in the meantime, it's not the Fall yet, it's March - so Lenten and Easter blessings to you and yours.

Peace,
Pastor Gordon

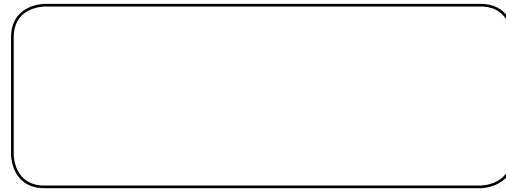
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Hope Church News

March 2013



Newsletter Volunteers Needed

Folding, taping, and fellowship.
Are these skills in your repertoire?
Please consider joining the crew that
assembles the newsletter each month!

If you are able to help once a
month, once a year, or somewhere
in between, please call Angie in the
church office, (616) 392-7947.
Your name will be added to our list of
volunteers, with your preferences for
availability.

The deadline for the April Newsletter is
Sunday, March 17

Please submit all articles and
updates to Angie Griffore
agriffore@hopechurchrca.org

View and print this newsletter in color by
visiting the Hope Church website
www.hopechurchrca.org



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