



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 58, No. 9

October 2015

In This Issue

Stewardship Update.....	2
Adult Education	2
Listening Training.....	3
Update from Paige.....	4
New Seminary Intern.....	5
Youth Ministry.....	6
Children's Ministry.....	6
Kids Hope.....	7
Ministry Highlight.....	7
Events & Announcements.....	8
Health Ministry.....	10
Caring for Creation	10
And Finally.....	11

Inserts:

- October Calendar
- Lectionary
- Restorative Circles Facilitator List

The deadline for the November newsletter is **Monday, October 19.**

Office Hours

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

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



Wednesday Evening Book Discussion Group

October 7, 14, 21, 28

6:45 - 8:15 p.m. - dessert provided

The Bible Tells Me So...Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It by Peter Enns

A Book Study with Pastor Gordon Wiersma: "I haven't read this whole book yet (I'm planning to do so with this study group!), but I have read enough of it and about it to know that it deals with questions about Scripture that a lot of people both within and beyond the church ask. And I've also read enough to know that the author engages those questions in an engaging, faithful, creative and even entertaining way. I'm not offering this book as the definitive answer on the questions it raises (nor am I claiming to have such answers!), but I do think it will

be a great resource for wondering about, understanding, and hearing more clearly the Book we love as followers of Christ. I'm looking forward to delving into this book together at Hope Church and invite you to join in this study."

~Pastor Gordon

Sign up in the gathering area or contact the church office by October 4 to be a part of the book study! Books are also available for purchase (\$10) in the gathering area.

Reading Assignment before October 7th session: We will be discussing chapters 1 and 2 at our first session on October 7.

Living Hope Project Making Strides

Lois Maassen, Project Team Leader

At its September meeting, the RCA Holland Classis approved our plan for financing our facility renovation project through construction, as pledges are received. That approval was the last requirement to be fulfilled to assure that resources are in place as construction begins. Our financing is through the RCA Growth Fund, which uses income for benevolence, extending the influence of Living Hope.

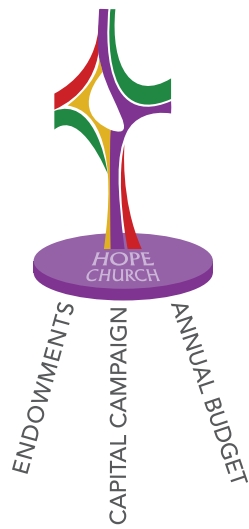
The Design Team is grateful that arrangements are complete, because much Design and Development progress has been made, detailing intentions and visions so that actual construction documents can

be produced. The architect and engineering team has been crawling around in attics and basements to confirm or flesh out the representations of our building on historic drawings. Some adjustments have been required as structural complications have been uncovered, but the overall intent of the design phase is still intact.

There are many steps to be completed, including approval of a site plan and from the Historic District, but the Design Team plans to share their completed work on November 15 and 22 in the Gathering Area. Plan to stop by!

Stewardship Update

The Stewardship and Finance Ministry



Again this year, the Stewardship and Finance Committee has elected to use the image of the three-legged stool as a symbol of the financial resources on which Hope Church's ministries depend. As the symbol suggests, we rely on three revenue streams to do all that we have been called to undertake: 1) the Annual Budget which provides resources for day-to-day expenses; 2) the Endowment which supplements those expenses and which provides a reserve for future needs; and 3) the Capital Campaign which funds the renovation and building program.

This serves to remind us all of this three-pronged foundation of our ministry and to initiate our annual stewardship campaign. To that end, we ask your prayers and your commitment.

This October we plan to follow an informational and budgeting process similar to last year:

- You will receive a copy of the 2016 budget in your stewardship mailing later this month.
- With this budget in mind, please give careful and prayerful thought to the level of contribution you can commit during 2016. You will be invited to bring your pledge form to church on Stewardship Sunday, November 8, or you can mail it to the church office by that date.

- On Sunday, January 17, there will be a congregational meeting to discuss and vote on the final 2016 budget. Through these last months of 2015 there will also be regular updates on giving to meet our 2015 budget commitments so that we can be well situated as Hope Church heads into 2016.

Hope Church has been blessed to be a blessing. While our means of ministry are varied and valuable, they require our financial support for their full blossoming. As you make your annual pledge to the life of Hope Church, join us in celebrating the many ways that Hope Church is a blessing to our world.

<p>Financial Update as of 9/17/15: Income YTD - \$439,176 Budget YTD - \$491,345 Expense YTD - \$491,456 Budget YTD - \$512,742</p>

Adult Education: October

Sundays, 9:40–10:40 a.m. in Commons I

October 4–October 11:

Understanding Islam

Oct 4: **Kari Miller-Fenwood**, Art Archivist for the Holland Museum and art conservator and restorer in private practice, will present a survey of Islamic graphic arts.

Oct 11: **Dr. Annie Dandavati**, Professor of Political Science and Director of International Studies at Hope College, will discuss current Islamic politics in the Middle East.

October 18–25:

Caring for Creation

Oct 18: **Everything Is Interconnected?**

Such is the refrain in the new papal encyclical. Is it true? If so, what does that mean? How should we live if everyone, and everything, is interconnected? Hope College religion professor **Steve Bouma-Prediger** will lead a discussion of Pope Francis's new encyclical "Praised Be: On Care for Our Common Home."

Oct 25: **What Kind of Person Would Do Something Like That?** What kind of person carves his or her initials into a 3000 year-old giant sequoia? What kind of person lives simply that others may simply live? **Steve Bouma-Prediger** will lead a discussion of ecological virtues and how they are cultivated to make us people of character who care for the earth.

Listening Skills - Congregational Care Training Event: Oct. 19

Ginger Clark, RN, Parish Nurse & The Congregational Care Ministry

Would you like to further hone your listening skills and learn about empathy as a kind of listening? The Congregational Care Ministry Team invites all those who are interested to join us as Reverend Dynna Castillo Portugal provides training in **Empathy: Listening that Heals** on **October 19 from 7:00-8:00 p.m.**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "Just as love of God begins with listening to God's Word, so the beginning of love for others is learning to listen to them. It is God's love for us that God not only gives us his Word but also lends us his ear. So it is God's work that we do for others when we learn to listen to them." This workshop will teach empathy as a kind of listening that springs from love and has the potential to bring healing to our hearts and minds. Participants will learn the difference between empathy and most of what passes for listening in our culture and they will get a chance to practice and hone their listening skills.

Reverend Dynna Castillo Portugal, Ph.D. is a faculty fellow at Western Theological Seminary where she teaches pastoral care and counseling and practical theology. She has received significant training in Clinical Pastoral Education and Nonviolent Communication. She is an ordained pastor at her home church in Mexico City and an accomplished worship leader as well.

In today's high-tech, high-speed, high-stress world, communication is more important than ever. Genuine listening has become a rare gift. It helps build relationships, solve problems, resolve conflicts, ensure understanding and improve accuracy.

10 TIPS FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

- Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.** How much attention are you really giving?
- Be attentive, but relaxed.** Be present, give attention, apply yourself, be ready to serve.
- Keep an open mind.** Listen without judging or jumping to conclusions.
- Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.** Try to create a mental model of the information being communicated.
- Don't interrupt and don't impose your "solutions".** Interruption says "I'm more important and interesting than you are and "I don't care what you think".
- Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.** Say "back up a second, I didn't understand what you just said..."
- Ask questions only to ensure understanding.** Stay on topic.
- Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.** Empathy- put yourself in their place.
- Give the speaker regular feedback.** Show them that you understand.
- Pay attention to what isn't said-** to nonverbal cues.

-Excerpts from FORBES/WomensMedia, by Dianne Schilling

World Communion Sunday, October 4: Collection of Breads for Community Kitchen

Please plan to bake or purchase a loaf of bread to bring to worship on Sunday, World Communion Sunday, October 4. The loaves will be received at our 8:30am and 11am worship services to beautify our communion celebration, and then will be donated to the Community Kitchen at Western Seminary to distribute to families in our community. We would love to have a collection of various ethnic breads to display and distribute, so please be creative!

Deacons' Fund: October 4



"The next Deacons' Fund yellow envelopes are dated October 4. Whether or not you use the giving envelope system, please consider a generous gift so the pastors and staff have resources available to help our members or those in the community with emergency needs. They so appreciate this source for financial assistance, and the Deacons appreciate your consistent support of this aspect of ministry at Hope Church!

Update from Paige Convis

To my Hope Church family, grace and peace to you!

Greetings from Schenectady, New York! I thought now that I am semi-settled I would write to you an update of where I have landed for now. I am serving at First Reformed Church of Schenectady as their Pastoral Resident. This is a very exciting position, in this position I get to do a little bit of everything. I will be forming and leading an alternative worship service, doing pastoral care and calling, officiating weddings (the pastors get a lot of requests for weddings here), helping chaplains at the local colleges, working with the Synod of Albany office, and lastly with Room for All. It is a lot going on, but a lot of good and challenging things!

Many of these aspects of ministry might cause you to wonder how an

non-ordained person might be able to do them, well that's the next piece of exciting news!!! I will be getting ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the RCA on **October 11th 2015 at 4:00** at Resurrection Reformed Church in Flint, Michigan. I know that this might be quite the trip for some of you but I eagerly invite you to join the North Grand Rapids Classis in worship of God as I am welcomed into the office of Minister. All of you dear people in some way have played such an important and central role in my formation as a person and as a pastor and so it seems most fitting to include you all in this celebration of God's faithfulness!

I remember all of you often with great fondness and thanksgiving, and pray for you all often as we now work in separate locations to bring the Good News of God's welcoming love to

all of creation. It brings me great comfort knowing that I have such a family of faith who both supports me and stands with me to do this good work. I pray that you will continue to grow in richness of grace and peace and experience the love of God in meaningful ways today and always.

Fondly,
(The almost Rev! :))
Paige Convis

PS: Know that I would *always* love to hear from any of you if you need something or want to say hello!

Washington School Neighbors

Andrew Spidahl, Neighborhood Connector

Geese appear high over us, pass, and the sky closes. Abandon, as in love or sleep, holds them to their way, clear in the ancient faith: what we need is here. And we pray, not for new earth or heaven, but to be quiet in heart, and in eye, clear. What we need is here.
-Wendell Berry

"What we need is here." This is the philosophy that undergirds asset-

based community development. This is the same faith that holds us to believe that a flourishing neighborhood isn't about bringing in a ton of resources. It's about unfolding our gifts, and daring to share.

In this season of geese, lets pray as Berry suggests, "to be quiet in heart, and in eye, clear." Attentive, listening, so that we can see the people around us, and their gifts, and know how to appreciate and participate.



WashingtonSchoolNeighbors.com

Facebook.com/WashingtonSchoolNeighbors

Chancel Choir

Brian Carder, Chancel Choir Director

The Chancel Choir continues to learn and teach new hymns of our hymnals. We all need to hear and sing new hymns several times before we can fully call them "known" or "loved".

As the choir prepares music for each 11 a.m. worship service, there are two services to be intensely rich in music. On October 4, we celebrate World Communion with new and loved global music selections, many of which are in our hymnals. On October 25 the choir will sing "Room for All," a song written for and inspired by the mission of the Room for All organization.



The Hope Church Chancel Choir: new singers are always welcome!

New Seminary Intern: Alyssa Anten

Hi my name is Alyssa Anten, and I am the new seminary intern. I am a Holland native- born and raised! I then went to Kuyper College in Grand Rapids Michigan, and graduated with my Bachelors of Social Work and a Bachelors of Arts in Bible and Theology. I currently reside in Grand Rapids with my husband of two years, CJ! We recently adopted a sweet pup named Dakota, and he is our whole world. No time for kids with him around! I enjoy running and mountain biking, but I also love sitting and reading for hours at a time. I am deeply moved by powerful acts of social justice, and put all my energy into righting what is wrong in the world. I look forward to beginning my experience with Hope Church!



Youth Ministry

Beth Jarvis, Youth Ministry Director

Its not enough to have right ideas. Its not enough to have good intentions. It is not enough to have great lesson plans. The apostle Paul tells us in Romans "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." The work of Christ in our lives is one in which we don't just receive right information. It is one that reconfigures our hearts and minds, both for our own healing and for that of our neighbor.

This is my prayer and desire for the youth of High Hopes and Fish Club this year; to not only provide them with solid Biblical tools for their faith, but also with opportunities to use these tools for the betterment of each other and our greater community. We will be spending time in scripture. We will be spending time with each other. We will be spending time in prayer, as we watch for the ways God will use us as answers to these prayers. We will be spending more time bridging these activities, lessons, and prayers to those around us. We will be connecting with the Seminary Community Kitchen and those with

tangible needs in our own church, and we will also be exploring some of the greater issues of our communities like racism and economic disparity. Our youth are such a gift to Hope Church and I look forward to watching how God uses them to be that gift to our greater community this year as well.



Children's Ministry

Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

Last month the Children in Worship leaders and the children began their very special time worshipping together. The leaders in each worship center have wonderful stories to tell the children each Sunday, and then the children have an opportunity to spend some time reflecting, and responding to the story they have heard. Please support and pray for the adults and children as they worship together. Visitors are always welcome to attend a worship center on a Sunday morning to worship with the children and to support their Children in Worship experience.

There will be no Children in Worship on October 4 except for the preschool worship center. The children are encouraged to remain in worship for World Communion Sunday.

CHILDREN'S OFFERING

This year's the children's offerings will continue to be dedicated to supporting schools in Martinpur, Pakistan. This village was named after Dr. Samuel Martin, a Presbyterian missionary

who was the great grandfather of Sam Martin, a member of our church and was integral in the education of the area's children. Our children have been learning about the Martinpur schools and their students, including watching a very interesting video found on YouTube entitled "A day in the life of a child" by Saints without Borders.

The children were very interested in how important education was to the Pakistan children and their families and the sacrifices the families made to have their children attend school. The students of Martinpur are included in our prayers in the worship centers.

BIRTHDAY BAGS FOR COMMUNITY ACTION HOUSE

During the summer months the children were learning about ways we can show that we are part of God's Family and what that means to us. One way is to share what we have to others. The children decorated bags that were filled with all the fixings for helping a family celebrate a birthday in their home. The children choose

a cake mix and frosting combination and also included birthday napkins, candles and a party blower for the honoree. The children learned that even the smallest of God's children have an important role in God's family.

FAMILY CHURCH SCHOOL

Family Church School will be an opportunity for families to come together in any configuration to spend the class learning, sharing and growing together in their faith. On October 11, we will be learning and talking about the Sacrament of the Lord's Table. What does that celebration represent to each of us? How do we talk about it as a family? Were there questions about World Communion Sunday? Leaders will be there to do the activities with the children whose parents are unable to participate. Make Christian Education a priority in your family's life.

****Please put on Calendar****

October 4 Pre-K Children In Worship only

October 11 Family Church School

Prayers for a New Year

Anne Duinkerken and Barbara Joldersma, Kids Hope USA Co-Directors

Please pray for our returning mentors, prayer partners and Kids Hope Vanderbilt students as they resume their work together during the week of October 5. We are very grateful for each of them for without their commitment there would be no Hope Church Kids Hope.

It takes a little longer to begin working with students who are new to the program, but we hope to have all of our mentors working with students by the middle of October and we ask for your prayers for them as well.

We also ask you to pray that we will be able to provide a mentor for each child

referred to us, which is something that we were unable to do during the 2014-2015 school year. Our need for new mentors continues to be great.

For further information about Kids Hope and opportunities to work with Hope Church's ministry to at-risk kids, please call Anne Duinkerken or Barb Joldersma. It's not too late to begin mentoring a child this year.



ministry HIGHLIGHT

This series of highlights on ministries at Hope Church is intended to be sure our members are aware of how things happen and their opportunities to engage with the ministry of the church.

Sacristy Guild

Joyce Teusink, Sacristy Guild chair

Do you ever wonder who keeps the sanctuary in good order? Is someone really responsible to make sure the hymnals and Bibles are all organized and facing the same way? It's true. Someone takes the time each week to prepare the sanctuary for worship. The group who is in charge of this is called "The Sacristy Guild." The work of the Sacristy Guild is to ensure that our sanctuary reflects the holiness and the joy that we all create together in worship.

In preparing for each service the guild members need to change paraments (Ecclesiastical vestments or hangings—they are hanging from each pulpit along with the covering of the altar/table in front of the sanctuary), set out communion ware, make sure the cross is in place, set out the Paschal candle if needed,

mark liturgical readings in the pulpit and lectern Bibles, and organize pew hymnals and Bibles.

The Sacristy Guild also helps with placing artwork throughout the church, as well as cleaning the linens after a communion service, polishing the silver communion ware when needed, taking the wax out of the votive candle holders, and helping to prepare and then clean the homebound communion kits. We work with the Worship, Prayer and Spirituality Ministry; our pastors, Gordon and Jill; Amy Sall sends us instructions each week as to what needs to be done; our resident artists, Kari Miller-Fenwood and Rachele Oppenhuizen; and Ric Beltran, our custodian/caretaker. With all of us working together, we prepare the sanctuary for our regular services,

weddings, funerals, baptisms, concerts, and special events.

The members of the Sacristy Guild are Linda Tiemstra Cook, Judy Werkman, Michelle Gerig, Nancy Rock and Joyce Teusink. We would like to thank Rose Mary Cantor for her time of service with us. We wish her well in her retirement. If you have any questions regarding Sacristy Guild, or would like to help in any way, please contact Joyce Teusink, chairperson of Hope Church Sacristy Guild. In closing, the word "sacristy" stems from the Latin "sacer," or "sacred." It is our humble privilege to be a part of the preparation of the sanctuary, trying to maintain a sacred and holy place for worship. To God be the glory—Shalom from the Sacristy Guild.

The next Ministry Highlight will feature the Communications Task Force.

Events and Announcements

Circle 1 is meeting at Freedom Village **October 7**, at 9:30 a.m.

Circle 2 will meet on **October 7** at 9:30 a.m. in Commons II.

Circle 4 will meet on Wednesday evening, **October 14** at 7:00 p.m.

Coffee Time at Resthaven - 40th St.

This is a caring outreach and fellowship opportunity for residents and their friends at different locations to meet with the pastors and other congregation members and staff. The next Coffee Time will be at **Resthaven - 40th St. on Tuesday, October 13, 2015, 10:30 a.m.** Mark your calendar, and come for an hour, all are welcome!

Hope Church Readers

Hope Church Readers will meet on Wednesday, **October 21**, at 1:00 PM in the Commons. Jean McFadden will lead the discussion of Euphoria by Lily King. Visitors and new members are most welcome.

Orientation to Hope Church Class

On Sunday, October 4, at 9:40 a.m., an Orientation to Hope Church Class will begin for people who are exploring possible membership at Hope Church. The class will meet on three Sunday mornings, **October 4, 11, and 18 at 9:40 a.m. in the Garden Lounge.** A meal and a meeting with the Board of Elders for those wishing to join Hope Church will occur on November 8 after the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Public reception will take place during 11:00 a.m. worship on November 15. Please contact Pastor Gordon Wiersma or the church office (392-7947) if you would like more information. Please know that attending the class only indicates your possible interest in joining our fellowship, not your actual decision to do so.

Blood Drive - Oct. 18

The next blood drive will be held at the First United Methodist Church on Sunday October 18 from 8:30 am - 2:15 pm. You may make an appointment by calling the Red Cross. Walk-Ins are also welcome as always.

Brim Bunch - October 22

Brim Bunch will have its first meeting of the year on Thursday, October 22 at 6:00 pm in the Commons. Our menu will be beef stew, applesauce jello, bread, and pumpkin pie. A local humorist will be the speaker. The cost is \$8.00 payable at the door. If you aren't on the calling list, please call Marilyn Cook to make your reservation.

Cleaning Up the Church Gardens

This task needs to be completed soon! If you or a group you belong to have "adopted" a section of the church gardens, we need you to clean up your plot for fall. City curbside pick-up (of leaves only) will be from October 3 to November 14. Please bring your own clippers, rakes, etc. If you love to rake leaves, please feel free to share that gift with Hope Church. If you are uncertain about what needs trimming, please contact David VanHeest.



Pizza Sunday

The next pizza Sunday is **October 25**.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month



October Is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

The Community Ministry reminds you that October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In your thoughts, prayers and actions:

- Mourn those who have died because of domestic violence
- Celebrate those who have survived
- Connect those who need help
- Support those who work to end violence

This designation by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence helps bring awareness to the issues faced by battered women and their children. Every home should be a safe home.

Blueberry Pies

Thank you to the many hands who helped with the making and distribution of the blueberry pies, and thanks to all of you who purchased them. We made 309 pies and had a profit of \$3,040. From this, \$1,000 will be sent directly to the Haiti Foundation Against Poverty to pay for materials for the Gift of Hope women's program, which teaches Haitian women new skills and gives them income to provide shelter and food for themselves and their children. In some cases these women have been able to reach out and help others beyond their immediate family. The remainder will be placed in the Family Mission Trip Fund to help cover costs of a mission trip to Haiti scheduled for April 4-11, 2016.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 07 Eleanor Hopkins
Care Group: 6
- 20 Clarence Hopkins
Care Group: 6
- 29 Elsie Howard
Care Group: 5
- 31 Hank Telgenhof
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@hopechurchrca.org

Thank You

*A note of thanks to all the members and friends of Hope Church who gifted us with their music for the summer worship season, what a nice offering of praise:
Jim Brownson, Beth Carroll, Tim Cook, Isaac Edgington, Bob Johnston, Mary Hilledore, Paul Pearson, Tim Pennings, Gary & Ellen Rizner, John Schmidt, Andrew & Kallie Spidahl, and the "walk-in" summer choir.*

Snowbirds!

Please call the church office at 392-7947 to let us know when you'll be leaving and what your temporary address will be so that you can continue receiving the Hope Church News and other church mailings.

health ministry tidbits

1. Holland Hospital has a grant for providing mammograms and ultrasounds for women of Ottawa County who cannot afford these life-saving tests. Please contact Ginger Clark RN for details if you are in need or know of someone who is.
2. Please contact the Health Ministry Team if you are in need of an outdoor ramp. There is a organization able to assist with this. It is a moveable, modular system so it requires no builder's permit and it can be installed in less than a week. It can be purchased with a buy back option or leased.
3. Go & Glow Update: The Health Ministry Team hopes that you have enjoyed being active this summer! We would like to thank all those who participated and turned in their fitness cards. Whether you reached your goal or not, we encourage you to keep moving and enjoy the many fall activities out there! Congratulations to the winners of the prize drawing: Judith Boogaart and Cassidy Russell!

Health Ministry

Jackie Knoll, Health Ministry Member

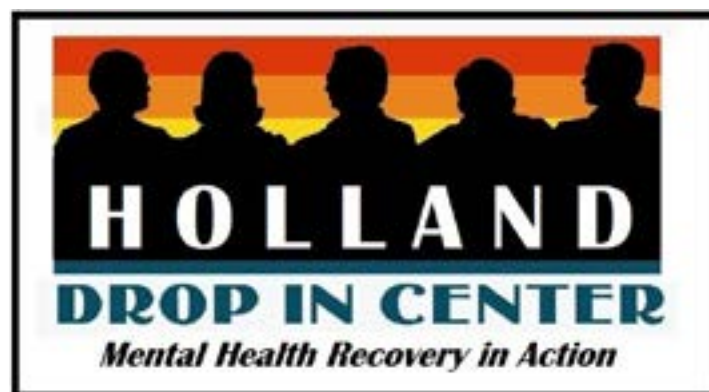


I would like to tell you about a group that has helped me create a life worth living.

The Holland Drop In Center was started in 1999 by a group of area consumers...adults with mental illness (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression and the like) to provide a place for people to gather who had emotional or mental health issues. Supported by Ottawa County Mental Health, the Holland Drop in Center is a place that provides encouragement to individuals with mental illness to interact and participate while supporting each other in their personal mental health. We provide an atmosphere of calm, relaxing and

non-judgmental acceptance. It is important for us as a consumer-run agency to have a safe, supportive, and productive environment so we can share our accomplishments and ideas to make recovery possible.

The Holland Drop in Center focuses on the beliefs that a person with a mental illness does not have to feel isolated from the community or society. Recovery is the belief that you have the right to live a successful and fulfilling life. The reason behind the idea of a consumer-run Center is that by working together and sharing experiences, consumers are able to best help each other. Because many individuals in the mental health system do not have the support of family and friends, their



consumer peers play a big role in helping them put their lives back together. Because they share the same pain, they can offer each other support and real empathy. They can work together to find solutions and alleviate fear.

Check out the Health Ministry Bulletin Board this month for a calendar listing of the support groups and classes that are currently being offered.

The Holland Drop In Center is at 636 Hastings Ave., Ste 120.

Caring for Creation

Joe Arevalo, Caring for Creation Coordinator

September 12, led by naturalists from Outdoor Discovery Center, a group of intrepid kayakers, including Hope Church members, ventured out onto the heralding waters of the Macatawa River. Fortunately everyone made it home safe other than some sore arms and wet clothes. We all saw first hand how murky the river was (1 foot of visibility) and how much clearer it became in wetland areas (3+ feet of visibility). We also spotted some of the birds that call the river home: Kingfishers, Great Blue Herons, Green Herons, Black Crowned Night Herons, Red Tailed Hawks, and some assorted ducks. It was an educational afternoon but it showed us only part of how a watershed's health can be improved.

For a more thorough picture, I invite everyone to attend a presentation on **October 25 during Pizza Sunday in room 106**. The Macatawa Watershed Project will provide an update on the

status of Project Clarity, a five-year, \$12 million campaign to cut down the amount of sediment, nutrient and bacterial pollution in Lake Macatawa.



and finally

"Our help is in the name of the LORD who made heaven and earth."

Those words from Psalm 124 often begin the liturgy at Hope Church. Have you ever noticed or wondered in that verse why the word "LORD" is in small caps like that? Last month Pastor Jill (God bless her on her sabbatical!) wrote about some responses to and input about worship at Hope Church, and I would like to continue that theme. This is something of a guide to the different ways we talk about God in our liturgy, and the reflection that is of biblical language.

Here's a basic primer on names for God in Scripture that are often seen in our liturgy:

- **YHWH** ~ this is the special revealed name of God in the Old Testament, spelled with the 4 Hebrew consonants Y-H-W-H = יהוה (the letters are read from right to left in Hebrew). This name for God cannot be fully known or pronounced, as the vowels for the name are uncertain. It is often said as "Yahweh" but that is an approximation (fyi – this name was previously transliterated as "Jehovah" in the King James Bible but that is now seen as an inaccurate expression of the name). The Hebrew scripture authors treated the name YHWH with such regard that they did not write it, but rather used the Hebrew word 'Adonai'/Lord in its place. Then in the version of

the Bible we use in English, the editors use "LORD" in small caps to alert us that this is a stand in for YHWH. So, when in our liturgy you see "LORD" used in a quote from Scripture (most often in a Psalm), then you know that we are expressing that this is a reference to the special revealed name of God, YHWH.

- **El/Eloah/Elohim** ~ these are the singular and plural words for "God" in Hebrew. These words reflect the generic expression of "god" in that culture, but particularly when "Elohim" is used in Scripture it expresses God as the true God in contrast to other gods. So in our liturgy when it says "LORD God", that is a translation in Scripture of "YHWH Elohim", and as such is expressing 'the one true God is YHWH'. Or when we simply use "God" it is an expression of "Elohim" (in the Greek New Testament this word for God is carried forward as "Theos").
- **Adonai** ~ this is the Hebrew word for "Lord", in reference to a ruler. When you see the word "Lord" in the Old Testament (when it is not in small caps!) and liturgy, this is a title for God that refers to God's authority and supremacy. In the New Testament Greek, "Lord" = "Kurios", and this is brought forward as a title often uses for Jesus, which also reflects the cultural meaning of a "Lord" as a person in charge of others.

- **Christ/Messiah** ~ We often use the title "Jesus Christ" in our liturgy. The word "Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah". "Messiah" means "anointed one" and it was the term used in Judaism for the promised one from God who would rule with righteousness and peace. In the Gospels, Jesus is expressed as the fulfillment of this messianic promise from God. So whenever we use the term "Christ" it is an expression of the Hebrew word and concept of "Messiah". And when we say "Christ the Lord", it is expressing Jesus Christ as the presence of the Lord God with us (i.e. Luke 2: "a Savior who is Christ the Lord").

Got all that?! It's not meant to be confusing or fancy, but something that can be meaningful as we are aware of the language for God that we are given and that we use. When you know the reasons and meanings wrapped up in some of the language for God, it connects us in a deeper way to a rich story of revelation and faith stretching back through millennia. And I hope it helps to see also the care and intention we use in our liturgy which we prepare to be (as Pastor Jill said) "the work of the people" as we worship our God (YHWH/Elohim/Adonai/Theos/Kurios/Messiah/Christ) together.

Peace,
Gordon



Hope Church News

October 2015



Youth Connections

Andrew Spidahl, Neighborhood Connector



At the end of June Hope Church hosted two teams from a new initiative in Holland called Youth Connections. These teams are made up of five teenagers (age 14-17) and an adult supervisor, and are effectively contracted for a week by a variety of organizations around the

community doing jobs ranging from organizational work in the office to pulling weeds in the garden. Look in the Gathering Area near the couches for a picture of the youth that came to work for us this summer, and to read more about the program.