



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 60, No. 3

March 2017

In This Issue

Holy Week.....	2
Adult Education	2
Annual Meeting.....	3
Ministry Highlight.....	3
Witness to	
Reconciliation	4-6
Welcome Katie Norris.....	6
Refugee Support	7
Kids Hope.....	7
Events &	
Announcements	8
Children's Ministry.....	8
Caring for Creation.....	9
Health Ministry.....	10
And Finally.....	11

Inserts:

- *March Calendar*
- *Lectionary*
- *Consistory, Staff & Ministry Chairs List*

The deadline for the April newsletter is Sunday, March 19.

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

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The Season of Lent at Hope Church

Elements

1st Sunday in Lent: *Bread*
 2nd Sunday in Lent: *Wind*
 3rd Sunday in Lent: *Water*
 4th Sunday in Lent: *Oil*
 5th Sunday in Lent: *Flesh*

The spirituality of these Lenten texts is discovered in the everyday elements of creation. These stories don't take us away from the tumult of life but reveal God present in the midst of the stories that are unfolding around us and the elements that ground us.

Join Early Worship at 8:30 AM on the 1st Sunday of Lent, March 5, for their first worship time in the new chapel!

Wednesday Evening Lent Series

Nursery care will be provided.

During the Season of Lent, you are invited to join in worship, discussion and creative response as we explore the book *Prophetic Lament* by Soong-Chan Rah. Prophetic Lament uses the Old Testament book of Lamentations as a framework to explore the history of race, Christianity and economy in the United States. The book draws on the power of biblical lament to face a broken history and to open us to God's transforming presence personally and corporately.

Rather than simply a book discussion, this Wednesday evening Lent series will be a time to worship, reflect and respond together in the spirit of biblical lament. We will gather each evening in the Chapel for prayer, then explore a chapter of the book, and then respond creatively through writing and reflection. Along with Hope Church, other congregations in our community are also engaging with this book, and we will have opportunities later on to hear from those communities.

All are invited to be a part of this Lenten experience. Please sign up for the group in the gathering area. Books are available for \$15.

Ash Wednesday, March 1

6:00 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. Worship

Worship in the sanctuary will include scripture, music, prayer and meditation. The imposition of ashes is an ancient symbol that calls us into this season. Maple Avenue Ministries will also be present with us for dinner and worship.

March 8, 15, 22, 29, & April 5

Lent Series: Prophetic Lament

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Evening Prayer

Discussion

Creative Response

For more information on the Season of Lent, see page 2.

Healing Prayer Service: March 26

Sunday, March 26

11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

There will be a healing prayer service as part of our 11:00 AM Worship Service on Sunday, March 26. The liturgy at the 11am service will focus on the need for healing from God in our lives, in the lives of those we love, and in our world. During the service, there will be the opportunity for the congregation to offer prayers for healing and to receive a blessing of healing oil as a symbol of God's healing touch. If you are unable to attend and would like a particular prayer for healing to be included, please contact one of the pastors or the church office to let your prayer request be known.

Worship During Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 9

8:30 a.m. Early Worship Palm Sunday Celebration

11:00 a.m. "Worship for the Way of the Cross"

We begin the journey through Holy Week with dramatic reading, liturgical dance, and music.

Maundy Thursday, April 13

6:00 p.m. Seder Dinner

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 in the Gathering Area or by calling the church office (392-7947).

7:45 p.m. Tenebrae Service (Service of Shadows)

The service follows the path of Jesus' passion through the Last Supper and crucifixion and includes a hand washing ritual, communion, prayer, scripture & music.

Good Friday, April 14

12:10 p.m. Community Good Friday Service

Hosted at Third Reformed Church and co-sponsored by the Washington School and Westcore Neighborhood Churches (Hope Church, First United Methodist Church, Third Reformed Church, New Community Fourth Reformed, and Maple Avenue Ministries).

Easter Sunday, April 16

8:30 a.m. Early Worship Service

9:40 a.m. Easter Brunch

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Celebrate the Risen Lord! Pastor Gordon Wiersma, preaching, and Pastor Jill Russell, liturgist; with choirs and brass under the direction of Brian Carder. Church School will not be held.

Bus Ministry: On Thursday, April 13 for the Seder Dinner and Tenebrae Service, there will be a bus pick up at 5:30 pm at Appledorn, 5:40 pm at Freedom Village, and 5:45 pm at Warm Friend, with a return trip after the Tenebrae Service.

Adult Education

Sundays, 9:40-10:40 am

March 5-26: The Health Ministry and the Disability Concerns Task Force will present a series of classes entitled: "Building A Sense of Wholeness and Belonging within the Church and Community. We will explore how we, as a community of faith, assist in this task for all persons – and especially for persons with special needs and disabilities.

March 5: How Are We as A Church Doing? We will identify ways in which people experience a sense of wholeness and belonging within the church and in Hope Church, in particular.

March 12: How Can the Church Better Create a Sense of Belonging for Its Worshipers? Tory White from the Christian Learning Center (CLC) will present a model, known as Universal Design, which examines both architectural and programmatic elements of inclusivity with the church.

March 19: What Are Ways in Which Our Seminary Is Preparing Leaders to Build Wholeness and Belonging within the Church? Dr. Ben Conner, director of the new certificate program on disability ministry at Western Theological Seminary (WTS), will present how WTS is better preparing seminary students for this aspect of ministry.

March 26: How Do We Support Wholeness and Belonging for All Persons within Our Community? Lyn Raymond, coordinator of the Lakeshore Housing Alliance, will provide an overview of affordable housing options for various segments of our Ottawa County population. Other persons will share specific options for addressing the housing needs for persons with disabilities.

Annual Congregation Meeting Highlights

From January 22, 2017

During the Annual meeting, congregation members discussed several questions around their tables. The following is a sampling of the kinds of responses people shared most frequently.

When you talk about Hope Church to friends, what do you talk about?

- Room for All – welcoming and affirming of LGBTQ community
- Feeling of welcome, acceptance, “safe” space, sense of home and belonging
- Worship: strong liturgy, blend of contemporary and traditional, ritual, relational
- Political & social activism
- Great music and organist
- Commitment to progressive thinking & theology; willingness to explore
- Involved in community
- Challenging and insightful sermons
- Cherish diversity
- Healthy church environment; function as a church family

How does Hope Church enrich the way you live out your faith in our community?

- Worship & preaching challenges us, helps us be involved

- Makes facility & resources available to support us & outside groups
- Recognizes broader community needs
- Adult Education and other adult programs
- Room for All
- Equip us for the next 6 days
- Emphasis on God’s love
- Encourages membership
- Picnics help meet neighbors
- Kids Hope

How do you hope to engage in the ministry of Hope Church over the next year?

- Work for social justice; call legislators and contact political leaders
- Choir
- Serve on ministries
- Book discussion & midweek studies
- Outreach to new members and visitors - especially single people
- Worship
- Outreach of community; engaging in community
- Caring for others; visiting homebound members
- Prayer chain
- Notice the aging of helpers in long time roles; need to develop new volunteers

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.

Communications Task Force

Megan Arevalo, Communications Task Force Member

The original goal of the Communications Task Force was to develop a cohesive and strategic approach to all communications within and beyond Hope Church to be more effective in sharing the mission of our congregation and inviting people to be engaged in the life of our church. The Communications Task Force focuses on supporting the Outreach and Hospitality Ministry with efforts in creating, writing, and placing strategic advertising and marketing messages.

They also research and suggest additional communication vehicles for use within and beyond Hope Church.

Here are some things the Task Force has been working on in recent months: updating our Hope Church ads, creating new scripture “memes” for use on Facebook, creating a new summer brochure, and designing invitations for the Living Hope Celebration (April 29!).

The group was originally pulled together but is open to others joining. Members currently include Lois Maassen, Michael Kolk, Pastor Gordon Wiersma, Pastor Jill Russell, and Megan Arevalo. If you are interested in learning more about the Communications Task Force, please contact Megan in the church office to discuss the ways in which you can serve Hope Church in this way.

Witness to Reconciliation ~ I work for the son of a Jewish carpenter

David De Block, Hope Church member

When asked to speak on my involvement as an advocate for housing in the city of Holland I was hesitant, but said yes. Personally I'm a behind the scenes guy who would rather problem solve in the shadows.

Let me give you little history about how I came to Hope Church. I was involved with a group of Christians worshiping together in a house church when I took my first job in Holland, but I was active in Holland Peacemakers (thank you, Elsie Lamb and Joanne Brooks) and Ah Mun food coop. Both met at Hope Church. When the house church dissolved I joined Hope Church. Soon I was actively involved at Hope and was a deacon when Kristen and I met so she joined me here.

But how did my interest in housing for all evolve? I grew up in Paterson NJ living in the house my grandfather built. We were a family of 5, plus my grandmother living on a typical city lot that was 25 wide by 100 feet deep. Yes, that is the measurement of the lot, not the house. I grew up in a small (some would say adequate) and loving home. My parents decided to remain in the hood when most folks, and even our Union Reformed Church, fled to the suburbs as the neighborhood became more Black and Puerto Rican. I came to Hope College for 3 years and then the University of Michigan for a degree in Mechanical Engineering. When I graduated, I looked for work that would allow me to be a peacemaker by not looking at weapon or military-based jobs.

My career began at Herman Miller office furniture in product development. Then an opportunity at ODL brought me to building products. During my time there I developed many new products

bringing natural light into the built environment. While there a new focus on measuring energy losses and gains through windows, doors and skylights brought me to working with the National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) for ODL. Developing standards evolved into becoming a code compliance specialist and also lead to my work with committees for the City of Holland.

Housing and Construction Board of Appeals addressed requested variances and other housing issues. In the mid 90's the city council empowered the "Ourstreet" Committee (OC) to address the deteriorating central city.

There was city, state and federal money to spend improving the "ourstreet" neighborhood. Any project visible from the street was eligible for funding. I was on the design committee there and also became committee chair. In the committee's 20 year history the core city became and remains more livable. Maybe we did too good of a job of making the core city of Holland more desirable as United Way recently published a 6000 Ottawa County unit housing need (rundown rental units making them affordable are now rare). As city staffing was reduced and committees merged, the OC was blended into the Neighborhood Improvement Committee and they now advise funding for housing issues.

Around the same time, 30 years ago, I was asked to join the board of Lakeshore Habitat for Humanity. Habitat's mission is to work with families to build simple, decent housing. When I started working with LHFH, there was no paid staff and it became my other 40hr/ week

job. I oversaw our first executive director hire. During my 6 years on the board, and ever since, I do much of their design detail work and have many of the drawings on my home pc. Since the efficient use of materials has always been important to this "Dutchman" by working on designs, I can positively impact the way in which materials are used. These days, I build with the Wednesday crew whenever possible.

As word got out that I was willing to do design and drawing work, I was approached by both Jubilee Ministries and Homecor. Jubilee Ministries is working to maintain the value of the core city neighborhoods by rehabilitating houses as well as building new homes. Their hope is that by increasing owner-occupied homes at all levels, there will be increased stability in the core city. Homecor works to make existing housing stock more livable. They are currently both working on 16th and Central Avenue. Homecor renovated 3 of the larger older homes and added garages. Watch as Jubilee is building 6 small houses (475 sf) there as well. A new idea for Holland.

LHFH builds simple housing with families on the edge of making it. Homecor works to make existing core city housing stock livable and still affordable. Jubilee works to keep the neighborhood up by taking core city houses that need major updating and renews them for the upwardly mobile and empty nesters that want to be near town. The City of Holland has boards and commissions addressing housing concerns from a variety of perspectives. I find many places right here for the gifts I've been blessed with. Join me as the spirit moves you.

Witness to Reconciliation

Laurie Baron, Hope Church member

This morning I want to tell you about a young woman I met a few months ago who I'll call Jessie. To meet her I drove 25 miles south through beautiful farmland that begins to rise and fall as it nears the river. The drive refreshes my spirits—no wonder people love their lives in the small towns of Allegan County.

But the place where I met Jessie isn't beautiful or comfortable, because she was living in the Allegan County Jail. She was one of a writing circle that I facilitated through the late summer and autumn. Every Monday afternoon, we pull plastic chairs into a circle in the middle of the large, white, echoing room where the women spend both waking and sleeping hours. They've had other classes, but never before a writing "class" and the first day, their faces are wary. What is coming at them now?

I begin the way I begin every new group—by telling them that their words can be strong and beautiful, that everyone is born with creative genius, and that writing as an art form belongs to everyone, regardless of education, income, or class. They begin to look interested. I tell them that I'm not the teacher, that I will write along with them and we will learn from each other. I tell them I will bring prompts to help them get started. I tell them my job is to keep the circle safe.

I see relief flicker on some faces. This isn't English class. No red pencils. no grades, no evaluations. We're going to read to each other and tell each other simply what we like and remember from the writing. That's all.

Every time I facilitate a writing group, it's in the same way, using the same practices. Every time, the same things happen. People go from anxiety to pleasure, their eyes get bright and they laugh and sometimes cry. They form deep bonds with people they know next to nothing about. Walking into the jail that first Monday I had no assurance that this circle would be like the others. I expected they might be unable to trust me or each other. I wondered whether there would be disruptions or if any of them would seem scary. After all, they're criminals.

Instead of those things I feared, I found gratitude and welcome. The women were supportive of each other and of me—thanking each other especially for writing the hard, true things.

Yes, each one has broken the law. I don't know any of those details unless they tell me their stories. What I do know is that they are whole people with lives that extend far beyond their months, sometimes years, behind bars. I know they are mothers and grandmothers and wives and sisters. And I have learned that every woman I've met so far has experienced sexual abuse or domestic violence as a child and as an adult, and that every one struggles with addiction. They face these tough circumstances with courage and often surprising hope and faith.

Now I want to get back to Jessie. One day our prompt was a smell—the smell of vinegar. I noticed how perfectly Jesse traced her creative process with her words, and she gave me permission to share this writing with you. As you listen, notice how she moves from her physical and mental moment to the prompt, to memory, to description, to reflection, and finally, to the core of her heart on that day. She begins right where she is:

As I sit in this circle with my feet propped up in a blue plastic chair, all I can focus on is how much pain I'm in, trying to think positive....Stuck inside my head falling further and further away from reality.

Then I get passed a jar filled with liquid. I was instructed to smell it. It caught me by surprise—the smell so strong.

Turned my stomach upside down, reminded me of the time when I was fifteen years old sitting all by myself in my little room with two bottles of wine that my neighbor and I stole from her dad's wedding. Ugh! The awful taste it had going down. Although it was worth it afterwards—the buzz, feeling numb, no more pain, no more darkness. Filled with warm fuzzy feelings, smiling from ear to ear. Oh the greatness I felt not to be stuck inside my dark soul; to feel at peace for once was like everlasting, never wanting to come out of that state of mind, thinking this was all it takes to be happy.

However, little did I know the next morning I was gonna feel so bad. My head pounding and pounding, to hear a whisper made me want to die. If only I had known the road ahead of me, the road of master distraction, of continuing to live in the darkness

continued on page 6

HOPE CHURCH NEWS

continued from page 5

I was striving to come out of.

Twenty-seven years old and here I sit, still suffering from a disease I thought I would never get. Addiction.

The pain Jesse mentioned was due to her advanced pregnancy, and she has since given birth to a healthy baby, her fourth. She is now in residential treatment for her addiction, and all four kids are with her. She has many obstacles to a healthy, stable life for herself and her children. Lots of practical problem-solving to do. Still, she is one of several women who said writing circle was their favorite class. Over and over, during an evaluation of our time together, the women mentioned the freedom they find in writing. So we are calling ourselves Freedom Writers.

There's more I could tell you—about the difficulties incarcerated women face, about studies that confirm the value of writing programs for prisoners, about my surprise at finding myself compelled by this population—but we'd be here all afternoon. So I'll end by giving God thanks for the opportunity to begin this work, and to you all for being God's agents in bringing it about, because it was here last year during the season of reconciliation that I first heard about Sue Fleming's work in the Allegan Jail and began the conversation that led to my involvement; and just recently our consistory has taken Freedom Writers under its wing, as a ministry of Hope Church.

I have many hopes for the future of Freedom Writers, and that, too, is a conversation for another day. Today I just want to invite you to celebrate with me the moments when voices emerge out of silence—voices of whole, creative women who deserve to recognize the strength and beauty of their voices, and whose voices we need to hear. We are not complete without them.

New Administrative Assistant: Welcome, Katie Norris!



Greetings Hope Church!

My name is Katie Norris and I already feel so welcomed by the staff at Hope Church. I am eager to meet all of you and discover the wonderful activities and ministries that Hope is involved in. I am excited to work alongside such a positive and supportive staff and anxious to see what we can accomplish together.

I have lived in Holland most of my life and graduated from Calvin College more than a few years ago :). I have always enjoyed working in the field of Human Services and have a special place in my heart for those most in need in our community. I feel strongly about being inclusive and welcoming to everyone, no matter their circumstances.

For the past three years, I have been working as a Family Services Advocate for Head Start; a free preschool for low-income families. I loved working with the families and helping them connect with resources. Sometimes people needed tangible help and other times they just wanted an encouraging word and an understanding heart. I felt honored to be a support to the people in our community.

Holland is an amazing city and I love having my family live, work, and play here. We take full advantage of all the festivals, parades, and parks that Holland has to offer. If you visit Kollen Park, you probably have seen our sons in the trees, on the playground, or catching fish. I am hoping to learn more about everything Hope Church is already doing to connect with our community, and I feel blessed and thankful for this amazing opportunity.

Sincerely,

Katie Norris

An Update from the Refugee Support Network

Alyssa Anten, Seminary Intern

There are many opportunities for continued involvement with refugee families in the Holland area, despite it looking different than originally planned. Part of the work Hope Church has committed to is being extra support for those churches who are struggling to meet the needs of their families. Some of the Hope Church volunteers have done transportation, tutoring, and teaching English. Others have been able to bring meals or goods. And many more have lifted these families up in prayer. Part of the work I have been doing is staying aware of all that is happening in our community. I have connected with many churches through a community network and that is largely how I learn where, when and how to mobilize volunteers. The other piece Hope Church has committed to is staying

aware of what is happening within the community of Holland. This has been partnering with churches, advocacy, or events. These two commitments go hand in hand as they encourage Hope Church to stay aware and ready to act.

This update comes with a request. My internship at Hope Church will be ending at the end of April, which means the support network will need a new point person. One of the most important tasks of that point person is attending the monthly Holland area network meetings. The network meetings are the best place to learn of needs and the energy of the community. I am unable to attend these meetings this semester due to my class schedule, therefore the need for someone willing to attend is pretty immediate. Many in the community

have come to appreciate the presence of Hope Church, and it is my desire to continue to provide that.

Please contact me if you are interested in getting involved through volunteering with families, receiving emails and information regarding what is happening in the community, attending the monthly community network meetings, or becoming the point person in the Spring.

Thank you for continued efforts and interest in supporting our community.

Blessings,

Alyssa Anten

Kids Hope

Vicki Rumpsa, Kids Hope USA Co-Director



I LOVE KIDS HOPE! That is the first thing that came to mind when I sat down to write this newsletter. Maybe it's because it's Valentines week or maybe it's because I have read so many positive Kids Hope Progress Reports this week that I just feel like celebrating. I think that it is also that we recently hosted an Appreciation Dinner for our volunteers and I remember just looking over the 40 or so who were there and how my heart was just filled with gratitude for each person who commits to this program.

I am also in the process of registering some of Kids Hope children for Camp Geneva. We are blessed here at Hope Church with a special fund that contributes directly to the cost of sending any Kids Hope children who want to go to either the day camp or the overnight camp. This amazing opportunity is made possible by the funds contributors, Karen and Larry Mulder, as well as by the generosity of Camp Geneva who holds spots for these kids and provides scholarships to cover part of the amount. All we ask of the parents is \$25.00. As of today we have 8 children from our Hope Church Kids Hope program going to Camp Geneva. We had only 1 last year so this is really something to celebrate.

Why the increase? We made a decision to do a better job of not only

informing the kids about camp but we also decided to do a better job of alerting the parents as to when the Camp Geneva forms were coming home. The kids saw a DVD of Camp Geneva during our Activity Day and I think that got them excited and I am sure our mentors also did a lot of talking in the last couple of weeks to encourage the kids to go. I love that this is part of the Kids Hope program! This is just another reason why I celebrate knowing that our Kids Hope children would not otherwise have this opportunity.

Soooo, love is in the air. Love for Kids Hope, love for our mentors, substitutes and prayer partners, love for Camp Geneva and yes, love for the support of Hope Church and it's members that make all this possible. By the way, I love my job! Can't get any better than this!

Events and Announcements

Women's Circle Meetings

Circle 1 will meet March 1, at 9:30 a.m. at Rita Snow's home.

Circle 2 will meet March 1, 9:30 A.M. in Commons II.

Circle 4 will not meet in March.

Orientation to Hope Church Class

On Sunday, March 5, at 9:40 a.m., an Orientation to Hope Church Class will begin for people who are wanting to learn more about Hope Church. The class will meet on three Sunday mornings, March 5, 12, & 26 at 9:40 a.m. in Commons II. For those who are interested in joining Hope Church, a dessert meeting with the Board of Elders will occur on April 10 at 6:30 pm. A public reception of new members will take place during 11:00 a.m. worship on April 30. You are cordially and warmly invited to attend these orientation classes whether you are interested in membership at Hope Church or simply wanting to learn more about this congregation.

Jubilate Choir Rehearsals

All singers in grades 1 -6 are invited to join Jubilate Choir to prepare for Easter and Eastertide singing. Weekly rehearsals are on Sunday afternoons in March at 4:15 - 5 pm (except for March 26, which will be at 12:45 PM due to Pizza Sunday). For more information, contact Brian Carder.

Daylight Savings: March 12

Daylight savings begins at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 12. Remember to turn your clocks forward an hour!

Coffee Time at Freedom Village

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 Freedom Village on Tuesday, March 14, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. Mark your calendar, and come for an hour, all are welcome!

Hope Church Readers

Our next meeting is on Wednesday, March 15th at 1:00pm in Commons II. We will be discussing the book The Boys in the Boat by Daniel Brown. Our leader will be Audrienne Hill, and the hostesses will be: Barbara Bright and Amy Smith. New members are always welcome!

Spring Garden-Clean Up

Gardeners! A clean-up extravaganza is planned for **Saturday, March 25 from 9:00 am til noon!** Plan to come for an hour or half a day – there will be plenty to do and people to tell you what to do! Bring your own equipment and gardening gloves.

Pizza Sunday

The next Pizza Sunday is scheduled for March 26.

Hope for Restoration - Radical Hospitality and Prison Reform

A conference on restorative justice organized by Calvin Prison Initiative Students from the R.A. Handlon Correctional Facility on Sunday, March 4 from 9 am – 4 pm in the Maas Conference Center at Hope College. The conference is free to attend, but registration is required. For additional information and to register, please visit <http://www.saintbenedictinstitute.org>.

Red Cord Community

An ecumenical non-profit organization, Red Cord Community cultivates the conscious integration of Christian spirituality and activism through the practices of Contemplation, Compassion, Creativity and Community. Thursday evenings in March - Lenten SoulShops: A Twist on Classic Christian Disciplines. The Prayer of Examen and Dreamwork, Multi-sensory Lectio Divina, Prayer Collage, Embodied Prayer, Practicing Non-Violence.

Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance - Summit on Race & Inclusion

Register online at www.ethnicdiversity.org to attend the 2017 summit, entitled "Moving Toward Justice." It will take place on May 23, 2017, at Frauenthal Center, Muskegon Summit.

Children's Ministry

Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director

Lent Devotions for Children and their Families

During the season of Lent take some time as a family to follow Jesus' journey through the city of Jerusalem by reading together and adding a sticker on the centerpiece. Together you will be reminded of all the events and people Jesus encountered during Holy Week. Each family with elementary age children will be given a Lent devotional packet before Ash Wednesday to start your journey together.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

05	Nancy VandeWater	17	Bette Williams
05	Marjorie French	18	Ruth Vrieling
06	Barbara Bingham	18	Jim Hinkamp
10	JoAnne Brooks		
14	Terry VandeWater		
16	Duncan McCune		

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

Thank You

We are overwhelmed with the love and care from the community known as Hope Church! Caroling, cards, cookies and the poinsettia were the icing on the cake! The cake - the steady physical assistance, support and encouragement from all of you. Thank you Hope Church!

~Stan and Nancy Rock

We want to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, and expressions of sympathy at the death of Peter's father, Peter Boogaart, who after a good and full life went to be with our Lord at the age of 94. We are privileged to have been a part of his life, and also to be members of the caring community of believers at Hope Church.

~Peter and Judith Boogaart

Caring for Creation Corner

Joe Arevalo, Caring for Creation Coordinator

With the new administration in the White House, many people are concerned about less attention being given to the environment due to a President with a lack of belief in human induced climate change. On the bright side, many people are speaking out and making sure their elected representatives know how they feel. A major upcoming event is the People's Climate March on April 29 in Washington D.C. At this point, no local events are planned, but that may change. Please contact Joe Arevalo if you are interested in attending in Washington D.C. as some financial & logistical support is available via the Caring for Creation ministry and via the Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice. Other events happening locally:

- **Women & Environment Symposium Film Showing of "Arise" and Panel:** March 1 @ 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Park Theatre. Arise captures the portraits and stories of extraordinary women around the world who are coming together to heal the injustices against the earth, weaves together poetry, music, art and stunning scenery to create a hopeful and collective story that inspires us to work for the earth.
- **Holland Energy Prize Biggest Loser Awards:** March 7 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm at Holland City Hall. Learn about the programs and tools helping us to see where we are and how we can best adapt to change with our City Master Plan and Sustainability Report. Hear from the Holland Energy Prize Biggest Loser award winners about what they did to save energy and you can get a door prize just by registering here or showing up. In addition, learn about how to make your home more efficient and meet the pros who can help you with financing options like the new Home Energy Retrofit and On-Billing Financing Programs with the potential for \$1,000's in rebates.

Your Body: Fantabulous "...awesomely and wonderfully made..."

A Gland Orchestra!

Earl Laman, Health Ministry Member



What's a gland? Can't tell you. It's not a thing. You can only know a gland in your body by what it does.

One internet site calls your body an "ORCHESTRA". It has a Producer. Hypothalamus is the size of a Brazil nut squashed under the brain, and is extremely smart and responsible for everything the orchestra does.

Secreted substances go to every cello in the body for its many performances, creating harmony, balance and coordination while telling the Conductor what to do.

The Conductor is Pituitary, a peanut-sized guy who keeps the beat going no matter what the composition or how the organ sounds.

What does he direct? Hormones! (Oh, those!) However, many hormone substances are directed to specific measures all at the same time. Hypothalamus keenly listens to body needs of all kinds, decides the tempo and progression of every measure; Pituitary replies with control and sensitivity for peak performance.

Between Hypo and Pitu "there is a marvelous system of communication and expertise"; Conductor Pitu commands messages "in a language each cell understands and transmits immediately to be obeyed with appropriate action". You can't beat that!

If Hypo detects any slack or misdirection from Director Pitu, he intervenes and supplies or corrects. Example: if a baby growing in the womb isn't getting a certain scheduled hormone, Hypo jumps in to correct the timing, keeps Pitu on the stick.

Pitu has two assisting hands, Anterior and Posterior, who each direct hormones to Principal gland section leaders, who administer to the many players.

Examples: Adrenal glands sit like little acorns cueing atop each kidney. The blood gets an Antidiuretic hormone to keep exact fluidity in the stream. Thyroid has a swell gland that directs and regulates the rhythm of all metabolism for growth in all sections- bar none!

The baton is always poised for whatever works are needed, from tonsils to toenails, skinned knees to brain surgery, sweat to icy chills, intake to output, recreation to procreation, bad moods to melodies, discovery to recovery.

Hypo and Pitu exclaim: "We have your back!- and a lot of other places."

An orchestra performs with a multitude of players and supporters. In fact, a foot has 2,700 minute glands discharging substances. Certainly, some need that!- but that's quite a song and dance.

Thus, hormones are constantly buzzing to every body part like "The Flight of the Bumble Bee"- without any rests.

One medical source resounded with: "The thought that these two little pieces of flesh can communicate with each other like conscious human beings and perform their multiple activities helps humans understand the Majesty of God."

We embody this constant concert! It deserves more than our applause. How about, "Bless the Lord, Oh my soul, and all that is within me, Bless God's holy Name!"

and finally

One in two teens will drift from God and the church after high school.

“Nones”, that is, people who do not identify with any faith tradition, are on the rise in the United States, going from 16% to 22% in just 7 years.

18-29 year olds are 17% of the population and 10% of our American congregations.

Statistics like these are jarring, aren't they? These numbers, culled by the Pew Research Center and examined in the book Growing Young by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffen, have served as a shot of espresso to the comfortable and even lethargic machine that is the American church. I was in seminary when this report was first released and I remember the stressed questions professors and students alike had regarding the American church. Are we no longer relevant? Have we been evangelizing all wrong? Are we dying? What is God up to in all of this?

This study is rarely far from thought when I go about the work of caring for our youth and connecting with young adults. I don't pretend to even know what our response to this cultural shift should be, but I am at least mindful that nothing is guaranteed with our future religious landscape. We cannot presume that the values and experiences we older generations had when we were in our teens and early twenties are the same for young people today. So much is vying for the attention of teens and young adults and they have countless opportunities and stressors. Most of our high school sophomores are already being asked to think about colleges and areas of studies; a pressure that was non-existent twenty years ago. Couple this with a mindfulness younger people have in regards to today's political instabilities and we might see that the church feels out of touch to young people, if we do not also care about these same concerns. We can see how questions about the church's relevancy are warranted.

So what about the questions I raised earlier? Are we no longer relevant? Have we been evangelizing all wrong? Are we dying? What is God up to in all of this? One of the more encouraging lessons I am learning, thanks to the aforementioned book Growing Young, is that the first step in ministering and attracting younger people to church is to assume that God is up to something good! The church is not ours, but Christ's. The church from its inception has gone through seasons of growth, persecution, joy, trouble, controversy, and revival and this season is no different. Even when our well-intentioned efforts turn out to be mistakes, we trust that Redeemer God is at work despite and even amid our mistakes. God loves all people, old and young alike, and is at work equipping the church for the evolving world. We are free to take risks.

Over the next several months, I will be addressing different sub-topics within the subject of church growth and youth in this newsletter forum, but these daunting questions are where I want us to start. The numbers might seem cringe worthy in our performance and results driven society, but we, the church, can look to our future with humility, excitement, and expectation. God loves the church and we are here to minister to the world for such a time as this.

~Pastor Beth



Hope Church News

March 2017



Prepare to Celebrate the Living Hope Renovation Project

Lois Maassen, Project Team Leader



As this newsletter goes to press, the architecture, engineering, and construction teams are checking their work, preparing punchlists, and finalizing details. Some electrical and fire monitoring system work will continue into early March, we believe, and a couple of projects, notably the 11th Street Entrance stairs repair, require reliable warmer weather.

Over the next month, we'll be moving in new furniture, rearranging some of what we have, and reorganizing what's been put in storage over the course of the construction project. Watch for opportunities for volunteers to help with those projects as well as do-it-yourself spruce-ups in some rooms that were out of scope for the major project.

And double-check your calendar to be sure that you've noted April 29 as the date for our dedication and open-house celebration! We'll host members of the design and construction team, neighbors, and others from the community in addition to Hope Church folks for tours and refreshments.

Living Hope Renovations Pun of the Month

Pastor Gordon: "Pastor Jill, at our next meeting do we still need to talk about reupholstering the furniture?"

Pastor Jill: "No, Pastor Gordon, that issue has already been covered...but if you have any questions you can contact the chair."

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 9:30 am Circle 1 9:30 am Circle 2 12:10 pm Quiet Space 6 pm Dinner 7 pm Ash Wednesday Service 6 pm Carillon Choir 7:45 pm Chancel Choir	2 1:30 pm FLEX 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 6:30 pm Health 7 pm Reconciliation 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	3	4 8 - 11 am Fish Club Pancakes R Us Western Seminary
5 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Alyssa Anten & Kari Miller Fenwood</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 9:40 am Orientation to Hope Church 9:40 am G.I.F.T. Class 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Gordon Wiersma</i> , communion 11:15 am Children in Worship 11:15 am 6th & 7th Grade 12:15 pm High Hopes Skyzone 4:15 pm Jubilate Choir Rehearsal	6 5 pm Executive Committee 6:15 pm Stewardship & Finance 7 pm Community	7	8 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 7:35 am Discerning our Future Task Force 12:10 pm Quiet Space 6 pm Carillon Choir 7 pm Lent Series	9 1:30 pm FLEX 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Caring for Creation 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	10	11
12 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Katie Van Ark</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 9:40 am Orientation to Hope Church 9:40 am G.I.F.T. Class 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Jill Russell</i> , communion 11:15 am Children in Worship 4:15 pm Jubilate Choir Rehearsal 6 pm Fish Club	13 11 am REST Support Group 7 pm Consistory with Ministry Chairs	14 10:30 am Coffee Time at Freedom Village	15 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 12:10 pm Quiet Space 12 pm Building & Grounds 1 pm Readers 6 pm Carillon Choir 6 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm Lent Series	16 1:30 pm FLEX 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	17	18
19 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Jill Russell</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am High Hopes Unshowered 9:40 am Chancel Choir 9:40 am G.I.F.T. Class 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>QiaoQiao Chen</i> , communion 11:15 am Children in Worship 11:15 am 6th & 7th Grade 4:15 pm Jubilate Choir Rehearsal 6 pm High Hopes	20 4 pm Outreach and Hospitality	21	22 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 12:10 pm Quiet Space 6 pm Carillon Choir 7 pm Lent Series	23 1:30 pm FLEX 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	24	25 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> Mar. 25-26 G.I.F.T. Weekend Urban Plunge Trip </div>
26 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Kay Hubbard</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 9:40 am Orientation to Hope Church 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Jill Russell</i> , healing prayer service, communion 11:15 am Children in Worship 12:15 pm Pizza Sunday 12:15 pm Fish Club Skyzone 12:45 pm Jubilate Choir Rehearsal	27 11 am REST Support Group 6:30 pm Christian Education 7 pm Worship, Prayer & Spirituality 7:15 pm Personnel	28	29 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 12:10 pm Quiet Space 6 pm Carillon Choir 7 pm Lent Series	30 1:30 pm FLEX 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	31	