



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 57, No. 2

February 2014

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Inserts:

- February Calendar
- Financial & Facilities Master Plan Survey

The deadline for the March newsletter is **Sunday, February 16.**

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



Hope Church in the Community

Keeping you informed of the agencies Hope Church supports through the Community Ministry

Anne Saliers, Community Ministry Member

For over 40 years Community Action House has been helping to end poverty and promote community through individual empowerment.

In 1969 a small group of concerned Hispanic residents led by Lupita Reyes visited a number of local churches advocating on behalf of migrant workers and others for help with unaddressed basic needs. Although the church groups were sympathetic to the plight, they just did not know where to begin. When Hope Church member and Hope College Psychology Professor, David Myers, asked Lu to come to his church, he promised that something would be done. A group of representatives from churches and the American Association of University Women met with Lu. The meeting resulted



in the formation of Community Action House.

Today, Community Action House has three locations in Holland and provides area families and individuals with food, clothing, shelter and the opportunity to build the necessary skills to achieve a stable and prosperous life. Learn more by visiting www.communityactionhouse.org or by signing up for their e-newsletter. You can find a listing of the most needed donation items on the website. Hope Church keeps a basket in the Gathering Area year round where you can donate items from the list, and additional opportunities to serve are often announced.

Annual Congregation Meeting Highlights

From January 19, 2014

- Looking back at 2013, highlights, concerns, and ideas were shared, using the Discerning Our Future themes as a guide for those reflections.
- The congregation approved the 2014 General Fund Budget.
- Hope Church is seeking grant funds to establish a Pastoral Residency program that would have a beginning pastor serve at Hope Church for 2 years focusing on areas of community outreach and young adult ministry.
- The Facilities and Financial Master Plan was presented to the congregation, seeking feedback on the design and feasibility of the plans.
- The Endowment Board gave its annual report, highlighting a year of very good returns for the Endowment and the need to continue to build the Endowment in support of Hope Church ministry.

WALKING THE PATH OF RECONCILIATION

Season of Reconciliation 2014

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Adult Education

9:40-10:40 a.m. in Commons I

Family Violence - A discussion about violence in homes in our community, our state, and our country. Facilitated by Stephanie Kitchen from the Center for Women in Transition.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Book Study

7:00 p.m. in the Garden Lounge

The final meeting of a four-week series discussing Oscar Romero's, *The Violence of Love*. Led by Paige Convis.

A special part of worship during the Season of Reconciliation is the "Witness to Reconciliation", as people in our faith community share their own stories of places of reconciliation in their life of faith. Manuscripts of these testimonies will be shared with the congregation as they are available.

Witness to Reconciliation: *Why I Uninstalled My Stillness Buddy*

Rev. Randy Smit, from January 12, 2014

Once upon a time...I downloaded a little program that could help me stop...for 30 seconds, once every 30 minutes, to pause and reenter the present moment. Ironically, I looked forward to the peace and groundedness that it could offer me.

Once upon a time I sat down to reflect on my experiences of Reconciliation. In fact, to get started, I Googled it. Merriam-Webster told me that it is "The process of finding a way to make two different ideas, facts etc., exist or be true at the same time." Interesting, I thought...Like: Be here now, you are at home in the present, here and now I dwell in God and God dwells in me. Be still and know...

And also...Go...now and make disciples, faith without works is dead, rise up shepherd and follow, this world is not my home, I'm just a passing through, be strong and courageous, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again, endeavor to

persevere, hang in there, hold on...press on! And also...

Surrender, relinquish control, allow what is to be...Trust in the Lord and lean not on your own understanding...Be wise as foxes, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

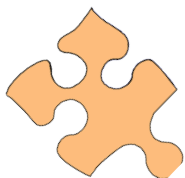
Reconciliation...Like knowing -- I am a promise, as Bill and Gloria Gaither taught me how to sing as a child, I am a possibility. I am a promise with a capital P. I am a great big bundle of potentiality...AND I'm tired, I have spinal muscular atrophy and most of my friends with my condition have passed on already. I'm developing arthritis, I'm on my horse headed happily toward sundown...AND I'm staying engaged, I'm keeping a schedule, I'm wanting connection and meaningful consistent contribution, it's 2014 and I've never felt so alive, so ready to rock.

I am what I am. I am what God has made me. I am created exactly as God wanted me to be...AND I'm not supposed to be like this... Jesus grieves with me through my difficulties...AND says Get up and talk. He says...

You are an egomaniacal jerk, you are the light of the world, you are an immortal diamond...you are a vapor, ashes...dust in the wind.

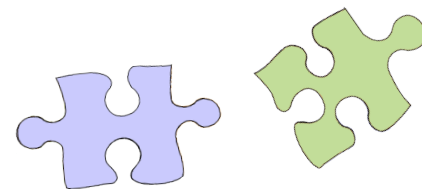
These were some of the thoughts I was having just before my stillness buddy chimed in. It started up. It wrestled with my dictation program. It blew away my notes...not unlike the high winds of a polar vortex. The program started up -- it was time to stop and relax and be still -- and the stillness buddy blew away my notes not unlike the high winds that blow over the Himalayas...

Continued on page 3



ADULT EDUCATION

Sundays, 9:40–10:40 a.m., Commons



February 9 & 16

Community Issues from Community Ministry: Affordable Housing in Holland

The Community Ministry is beginning an occasional series of Adult Ed sessions focusing on current issues in our community, focusing in particular on local agencies and issues focused on in our annual benevolence budget. In February there will be two sessions focusing on affordable housing in the greater Holland community:

February 9: What is the current situation for affordable housing and what are the anticipated needs? Why does a community need to focus on affordable and transitional housing? What are some of the successes, challenges, roadblocks and trends that leaders in our community identify? We will have guests from Good Samaritan and Community Housing Partnership lead our discussion.

February 16: This session will focus on various approaches to providing housing in the community, including organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Jubilee, and Homecor. Different agencies can help us to think through solutions to affordable housing that are sustainable and beneficial for the entire community.

With these sessions and for the ongoing occasional series on community issues, there will be an emphasis both on how Hope Church folks are already involved in these issues and on how others can also become involved. Our goal is to see the support we offer to our community not as annual gifts but as ongoing engagement and involvement in service to and learning from our neighbors.

February 23 & March 2

“Loyalty and Loss” Book Discussion

Lynn Japinga will lead a discussion of her book, *Loyalty and Loss: The Reformed Church in America, 1945-1994*. Copies of the book will be available for \$20 at the Welcome Desk on Sundays, Jan. 26, Feb. 2 and Feb. 9. Advance reading is encouraged but not required. Bring your questions about the contents of the book and the process of writing. We will focus on the first half of the book (chapters 1-4) on Feb. 23 and the second half (chapter 5-the epilogue) on March 2.

Witness to Reconciliation: *Why I Uninstalled My Stillness Buddy*

Continued from page 2

Where the Tibetan monks eat their meals, chewing every bite about 30 times as a practice of gratitude and then swallowing...where they meditate for hours and painstakingly render glorious masterpieces. With sand they create delicately crafted mandalas -- bearing rich symbolism of beauty, purity, healing...then they allow the Himalayas to sneeze them away. What they endeavor to perfect is blown away as nothing in an instant...they enter the mystery and ministry of impermanence.

Yet somehow their work, their practice seems to me of everlasting consequence...their joy cannot be taken away...their offering, their artwork scatters into the sky, never to be seen again, never to be forgotten.

So I uninstalled the stillness buddy... because despite saving and saving and saving what I was working on, it was unbearably unsettling to wait for stillness in this way, not knowing when or how the wind was going to blow next. I uninstalled the

stillness buddy because I'm not a Tibetan monk...I want to be, and I don't want to be. I'm Randy, alive by the grace of the living God...grace upon grace upon grace...and like you, and not at all like you...I'm in the process of finding a way...to let God hold together...all that I cannot. And if it's all right I'd like to ask you as a beloved community of Christ, to bear with me just a little bit longer... because I'm almost finished here... and I'm just getting started.

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.

The Health Ministry at Hope Church

A church Health Ministry? Yes! Because health and healing are basic to the life of Faith, individually and congregationally.

That is the stance of Hope Church's Mission and its Health Ministry - fully aware that health and healing involves the physical, emotional, mental and relational aspects of our lives. On the compassionate arm of Hope Church, we are the thumb trying to reach these four areas. And we walk hand-in-hand with the Congregational Care Ministry.

What do we uniquely hope to accomplish? To create in us, individually and together, a deeper, richer, fuller sense of wholistic well-being characterized by living in harmony with God's Grace. We want to make this real as we inform, alert, create awareness, enlarge understanding, provide experiences, and stimulate involvement.

How do we attempt to do this? Let us count the ways:

- We address a variety of healthful areas each month through articles in Hope Church News (see page 5).
- We offer a series of Sunday Christian Education classes focusing on a wide range of health issues through specialists, discussion, media presentations, and interactive sharing.
- We provide a constant bulletin board around various themes year-round in the Gathering Area, with available books and helpful pamphlets touching many areas of need.
- We've established a "Health" section in the Church library for your use on various areas of our life experience, and recommend books and reading sources on regular occasions.
- We get downright practical in the weekly church bulletin with tips, clues and cues for daily life application.
- We offer blood pressure screenings every month in the library usually after worship on pizza Sundays.
- In the early Fall we sponsor an evening opportunity at the church for flu and pneumonia shots through Health Department nurses.
- We oversee the care of First Aid kits, the defibrillator, and the many kinds of health equipment on loan from the church.
- We promote and hold several Blood Drives yearly, usually in conjunction with First Methodist Church (see page 10).
- We challenge your involvement in your own health: through the weekly Flexibility and Balance Class, an exercise class targeted towards older adults that is offered on Thursdays at 1:30 p.m.
- in the Commons under Maxine DeBruyn's experienced expertise; through the "Go and Glow" summertime exercise challenge; through encouraging church members to engage in joint and group fitness opportunities.
- We offer the bi-weekly R.E.S.T. group for those involved in caregiving, under the care of our church nurse, Donita Robards.
- We meet monthly as a Ministry on Thursday evenings to discuss, plan, oversee, and sense needs of persons and the congregation. Our church nurse, Donita Robards, reports to or consults with us - always in general terms to protect all confidences.

And who are "We"? Present ministry members include Ann Anderson, Eloise Van Heest (chair), Dick Noordijk, Ellen Hale, Maxine DeBruyn, Earl Laman, Tom Mullens, shepherded by Pastor Jill Russell. We are all professionally and/or experientially concerned and involved to bring the spiritual perspective Jesus offered, "I have come that you may have life, and have it richly" - into our life and breath as persons and families within the Body of Christ and beyond. We welcome your suggestions, sense of needs, counsel, life-wisdom and personal involvement to our Health Ministry.

The next Ministry Highlight will feature the Caring for Creation Ministry.

Hope Church Welcomes New Intern



Welcome to our new WTS Intern, Julia Brown. Julia will be with us this semester and through the next program year. Please be sure to welcome her as she serves and learns among us.

Greetings to all!

My name is Julia Brown, and I am very excited to begin an internship this winter at Hope Church! I have recently completed my first semester of the dual-track (M.Div/MSW) program at Western Theological Seminary (WTS), and am looking forward to the start of our second semester. I will be continuing on in Greek, Church History, and a full schedule of the rest of my first year classes, as well as auditing a class called "Food and Faith."

Before moving to Holland to attend WTS, I worked as a food service director for K-12 school districts in New Jersey, where I have lived all of

my life. I graduated from Rutgers University in 2011 with a degree in Nutritional Sciences; focused on food service administration.

I enjoy food, people, wellness, and finding ways to incorporate all in my call to ministry. I am a lifelong member of the RCA, and have recently served as an elder at my home church, the Colts Neck Reformed Church, in central Jersey.

I look forward to getting to know you as we worship, serve, and gather together in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Blessings and peace,
Julia Brown

Protect Your Heart

Donita Robards, RN, Parish Nurse

Heart disease is the number one killer in the United States. The best way to prevent heart disease is to learn how to care for your heart right now. There are five things you can do to care for your heart, per the Mayo Clinic website.

- 1. Don't smoke.** If you do smoke; quit. Talk to your doctor about a smoking cessation plan. Smoking forces your heart to work harder. It increases your heart rate and blood pressure because it causes narrowing of the arteries. If you quit smoking, your risk of heart disease will decrease after approximately one year of not smoking.
- 2. Exercise.** Most sources recommend that you exercise at least 30 minutes per day, 4-5 days per week. Activity can be spread out during the day in 10 minute increments. Exercise prevents heart disease by helping to lose/maintain weight. It also
- 3. Eat a heart healthy diet.** This is easier said than done. DASH diet stands for Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension. A heart healthy diet is one of more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat, beans and fish. It is also a diet with less sodium than most of us would like to believe.
- 4. Maintain a healthy BMI.** BMI stands for Body Mass Index. Refer to www.mayoclinic.com for a BMI calculator. Type in your information and it will give you your BMI.
- 5. Schedule regular health screenings.** These are blood pressure, cholesterol checks and diabetes screenings. If you are a diabetic, you will want to maintain normal blood sugar levels by eating a low concentrated sweets diet along

helps to reduce stress levels. Find an activity that you enjoy and is convenient for you to fit into your lifestyle.



with taking your medication as prescribed by your doctor. Your doctor will probably want to order additional lab work called a Hemoglobin A1c, also abbreviated as HbA1c. This test gives your doctor your average glucose reading over the last three months.

Heart disease prevention saves lives. This year, make it a goal to protect your heart. Avoid being one of the deaths due to heart disease so you can improve your chances of living to see the *next* new year! For additional information on heart disease, contact your doctor, or parish nurse at donita.robards@resthaven.org or (616) 796-3800.

Youth Ministry

Anne Duinkerken, Youth Ministry Director

High Hopes

On Sunday, January 12, High Hopes reunited after Christmas break for sledding, hot chocolate and cookies at the Jerow-Teusink's. Sadly, the group had to cancel their weekend retreat to Cran Hill Ranch due to inclement weather. As an alternative, everyone gathered at Hope Church for an overnight lock-in. A great time was had by all!

Fish Club

Fish Club had a wonderful time at Cran Hill Ranch the weekend of January 17-19. Eight youth and four sponsors spent the weekend playing, laughing, eating, singing, sharing devotions, horseback riding, tubing down a snow covered hill, and enjoying a hay ride in the snow. The weather was perfect, and the fellowship was wonderful! The group looks forward to their



Fish Club youth and sponsors go horseback riding on their retreat to Cran Hill Ranch.

trip to Sky Zone in Grand Rapids on February 2 where they will enjoy bouncing on lots of trampolines. On Saturday, February 15 the group will serve breakfast at "Pancakes R Us"

at Western Seminary. The nonprofit organization serves about 200 low-income and homeless people each week.

Looking back at the 10th Street House Ministry Celebrating Good Samaritan & the Community Housing Partnership

We shared the sad news this past December that problems with the 10th Street house plumbing led the consistory to decide to demolish the house. All the details of the maintenance issues and economic considerations were covered in some detail at the December 8th congregational meeting.

We want to celebrate the ongoing ministry of Good Samaritan ministries in addressing issues of homelessness and affordable housing. Their vision for the Community Housing Partnership (CHP) continues to bring long-term support to people struggling with

housing insecurity. The partnership includes the Community Action House who provide case workers for each resident and local congregations who provide mentoring teams.

The Hope Church mentoring team is considering future options for how to continue to support families in the CHP program. The Community ministry will keep us up to date on those plans. For more information about housing issues, come to the adult education classes on February 9 and 16 (see page 3).

February Birthdays

13	Kay MacKenzie Care Group 3
24	Ruth Donaldson Care Group 8
28	Jean Cook Care Group 8

If you are 75+ years old and would like to be listed in the birthday column, please contact the church office.

Caring for Creation: There are No Little Things

Peter Boogaart, Caring for Creation Coordinator

In our practice, Christian faith is experienced and proclaimed against the backdrop of the liturgical year. In a structured, stylized way we tell the Christ Story over and over, year after year. This all could be quite boring except for the fact that telling the story keeps it alive, and the live story keeps us alive.

There's an entering-into quality of Christian life; it's not just a club membership. The notion of union and intimacy is in the background when, in speaking of God's creative power, Paul says, "...in him we live and move and have our being..."

Its essentialness notwithstanding, intimacy is under siege in our era. Sherry Turkell, in her book, *Alone Together*, ponders the emergence of texting as a preferred mode of communication. We have learned to avoid phone calls at all cost. They demand person-to-person response in real time; you can't prefab your answer—and therein lies the danger. Being engaged is dangerous; you may get hurt, you may be misunderstood, or you may lose control; that's all too much risk. Better to manage the danger through a filter of electronically predefined friends and content. The whole process, however, despite the appearance of limitless connection, produces isolation.

There's another view of intimacy which emerges from chaos theory. It has been said that something as small as the flutter of a butterfly's wing can ultimately cause a typhoon halfway around the world. That's hard to imagine and even harder to believe, but perhaps closer to what Paul is

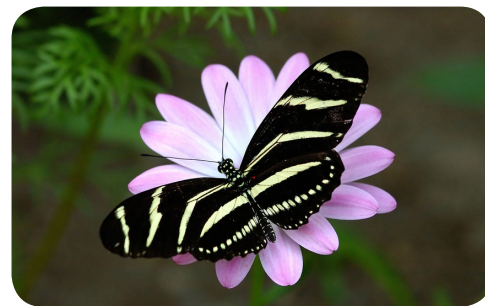
speaking about.

In an intimate, interconnected world, there are no little things. The richness and diversity of life is dependent upon the free access of any one thing to everything else. The rich flowering of diversity requires risky, and sometimes random, interplay within the world.

E.O. Wilson reports that each hectare of rain forest is unique. You can't see diversity from the air where everything looks like a great green forest; but on the ground, each hectare is a unique ecosystem, the end result of the soils, plants, insects, animals, and weather history that occurred only there.

Christian faith recognizes our frailties; we're all texters, prone to moving away from the richness of God's creative love and into fearful, sterile, edited worlds of our own creation. In confession we say: "There but for the grace of God go I." In the newfound security of God's love, risk is possible again because, as Paul says, nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Caring for Creation is an invitation to risk; not to be reckless, but to open up to the changes in lifestyle that lead to life and the full flowering of all creation. Hope Church has entertained risk before. We've planted a rain garden, made time for nature walks, installed energy efficient exit lights, improved boiler efficiency, and recycled batteries and cork. Some of these measures seem small, AAA batteries for instance. However, in an interconnected world, there are no small things; any one thing affects everything else. Behind any one product is a mammoth industrial



"In an interconnected world, there are no small things; any one thing affects everything else."

sequence of extraction, refinement, manufacture, packaging, shipping, and landfill. You can read about those connections in Ryan and Durning's, *Stuff - The Secret Lives of Everyday Things*.

Later this month, the Caring for Creation Ministry will offer another opportunity to risk. This challenge is bigger than a battery. You will be invited to join a working group of families to commit yourself to improving the energy efficiency of your own home. We expect this group to meet together throughout the year as we learn how energy is used in a home and then how efficiency can be improved. We will come up with specific plans for improving energy efficiency and support each other in implementing those plans.

Home Energy Team Invitation
Sunday, February 16
12:30 p.m. in Room 106

A light lunch will be provided.
Please sign up on the bulletin board outside Commons I.

Thank You

Dear Hope Church,

Thank you so much for your incredible generosity to Nuru International through the Christmas Offering. We are truly overwhelmed by the level of support that Hope Church has shown to so many people living in extreme poverty in rural Kenya.

The money will go towards Nuru's response to the drought and maize blight that remains a serious threat to rural farmers' livelihoods in Kenya. During last year's growing season, with additional funding Nuru was able to significantly expand its advisory and support work with the farmers in the Kuria West area, mitigating the effects of the encroaching maize blight. During the current planting season, Nuru is working closely with the farmers to diversify their crops so that they will be less vulnerable to this type of shock in future. So far, Nuru's response has been largely successful, and we hope and pray that it remains so.

Now for a more personal story of gratitude for Hope Church's support... As some of you may know, this has been a year of unexpected challenge for Scott and me. When we first approached Pastor Gordon in May with the request for support from Hope Church, we were on our way back into Kenya for the next year of our contract with Nuru. Sadly, only a week later, a death threat meant that we had to make the incredibly difficult decision not to return to the people and work that we loved so much.

We spent August hiking and camping out west, reflecting on our time in Kenya, thinking about the people we had left behind, and the work that we would have to trust others to continue. During conversations around the campfire, we tried to come to terms with what had happened and began to contemplate the next step on our journey.

Sitting in Hope Church on Christmas Eve, surrounded by so many people who were giving so generously to Nuru, was a special experience for us both. I was brought to tears as I thought about how much it will mean to our friends in Kenya to know that our church family in Michigan were standing by them in their time of need. I talked to Pastor Jill after the service about how the offering had been an unexpected moment of reconciliation for me.

It seems fitting for me to share this story during the Season of Reconciliation. I am reminded that reconciliation often comes in very unexpected and surprising ways. I am incredibly grateful for this particular moment of reconciliation. Joining Hope Church in this offering has been incredibly meaningful for us, and we thank you ourselves, and on behalf of those Nuru is working to serve in Kenya.

Claire & Scott Rumpsa

PS The next step on the journey has taken us to Washington DC! We love worshiping at Hope Church on our trips to Holland to visit Scott's family, and look forward to seeing you all again soon.

*Dear Friends at Hope Church,
The poinsettia is still blooming beautifully. I thank you for it and the many messages that came with*

*it. I have read them many times with gratitude. You are wonderful friends. Sincere wishes for a great 2014.
Yours, Helena Winter*

To the Hope Church Family:

For most of us – 'Life Is Good'! I think though that life, similar to sleep, health and wealth, must be interrupted at some point before it can be truly appreciated. For only when we've had the personal perspective of interrupted life can we most fully understand and value that... 'Life Is Good'.

Unfortunately, at Community Action House, many of the folks we are so privileged to serve are living 'Life Interrupted'. Your generosity helps bring goodness and hope into their lives at a time when they desperately need help and reassurance. They truly appreciate your ongoing support throughout the years. The food and turkeys you donate are used wisely to assist those we help.

Please express my heart-felt 'Thank You' to each person at Hope Church who participated in your 2013 Community Action House Holiday Drive. Together we are healing lives. My wish for you in the coming year is that you continue to appreciate that 'Life Is Good' and that you also continue to find ways to positively impact the quality of life for others in our community. BLESSINGS!

*Denny Oosterbaan
Resource Manager
Community Action House*

*Dear Hope Church Friends,
Thank you for the carolers and poinsettia and treats.
Love you all,
Bob Hanna & Judi Flater*

Wednesday Morning Taize Update

For the past decade there has been a brief, beautiful, meditative worship service held at 8:00am on Wednesday mornings in the Hope Church sanctuary from September thru May. The service is open to all but has mostly been attended by a small core group joined by occasional others. So usually it has been a group of around 8-12 people who gather in the chancel for a worship time incorporating reading of the weekly lectionary passages, singing of Taize-style songs, and sharing of communion, with the service concluding by 8:30am.

This past Fall there was a pause in that pattern as the service was not held for the Fall season, and in consultation with the Elders and Worship, Prayer & Spirituality Ministry the decision has been made not to resume the service for this Winter/Spring. This Spring the WPS Ministry will discuss whether and how to reconsider this service for next Fall. If you have any input to offer we would appreciate you sharing that with us. Please contact either of the pastors or the Chair of WPS, Cindi Veldheer-DeYoung with your input.

Thank Yous

Continued from page 8

*Dear Hope Church Friends,
I cannot tell you how wonderful it was to see Hope Church carolers at the Inn at Freedom Village. I am still overwhelmed by your many, many lovely Christmas cards and thoughtful notes. I am still healing, but I look forward to returning to services as soon as possible. Meanwhile, I am listening at home and thinking of you.
With my love, Abby Price*

*Thanks to the Hope Church carolers. It was a very pleasant happening when you came to our house and sang so beautifully. Thanks for all the lovely poinsettia and the many greeting cards. The little basket with all the homemade cookies and candy was much appreciated.
Sincerely, Kathleen Hopkins*

Greeters Schedule

The Outreach & Hospitality Ministry

Households assigned to greet prior to the 11am service in the upcoming months*

March Greeters

- 02** Paige Convis & Stephanie Croom
- 09** Richard & Marilyn Cook
- 16** Marty & Barbara Coon
- 23** Joe & Allison Davelaar
- 30** Marjorie DeBlaay & Michael Devries

April Greeters

- 06** Dave DeBlock & Kristen Gray
- 13** Maxine DeBruyn & Jean DenHerder
- 20** Peggy DeHaan & Helen DeWeerd
- 27** Keith & Becky Derrick

May Greeters

- 04** John & Jean DeWeert
- 11** Cindi Veldheer DeYoung & Jane Dickie
- 18** Dave Dirkse & Jane Park
- 25** Ruth Donaldson & Marjorie French

**If you are unable to greet on your assigned Sunday, you are invited to either switch with someone or find a substitute.*

At Home With the Word

Daily Bible Readings from the Revised Common Lectionary

January 27-February 2

Monday	Psalm 27:7-14
Tuesday	Judges 7:12-22
Wednesday	Luke 1:67-79
Thursday	Deut. 16:18-20
Friday	Deut. 24:17-25:4
Saturday	Psalm 15
Sunday	Micah 6:1-8

February 3-9

Monday	Ruth 1:1-18
Tuesday	Ruth 2:1-16
Wednesday	Ruth 3:1-13; 4:13-22
Thursday	Psalm 112:1-9
Friday	Isaiah 29:1-12
Saturday	Mark 7:1-8
Sunday	1 Corinthians 2:1-16

February 10-16

Monday	Romans 11:2-10
Tuesday	2 Corinthians 4:1-12
Wednesday	John 8:12-30
Thursday	Psalm 119:1-8
Friday	1 John 2:7-17
Saturday	Deut. 30:1-9
Sunday	Matthew 5:21-37

February 17-23

Monday	Exodus 20:1-21
Tuesday	James 2:1-13
Wednesday	Matthew 19:1-12
Thursday	1 Cor. 10:23-11:1
Friday	Psalm 119:33-40
Saturday	Matthew 7:1-12
Sunday	Matthew 5:38-48

February 24-March 2

Monday	Romans 12:9-21
Tuesday	Hebrews 12:14-16
Wednesday	Psalm 119:57-64
Thursday	Philippians 2:19-24
Friday	Philippians 2:25-30
Saturday	Psalm 2
Sunday	Matthew 17:1-9

Transfiguration Sunday

Events and Announcements

Blood Drive - Feb. 2

The next blood drive is scheduled for Sunday, February 2 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. at First United Methodist Church. Walk-ins are welcome.

Coffee Time at Warm Friend - Feb. 11

The next Coffee Time will be at Warm Friend on Tuesday, February 11 at 10:30 a.m. 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. Mark your calendar, and come for an hour!

Walk for Warmth - Feb. 8

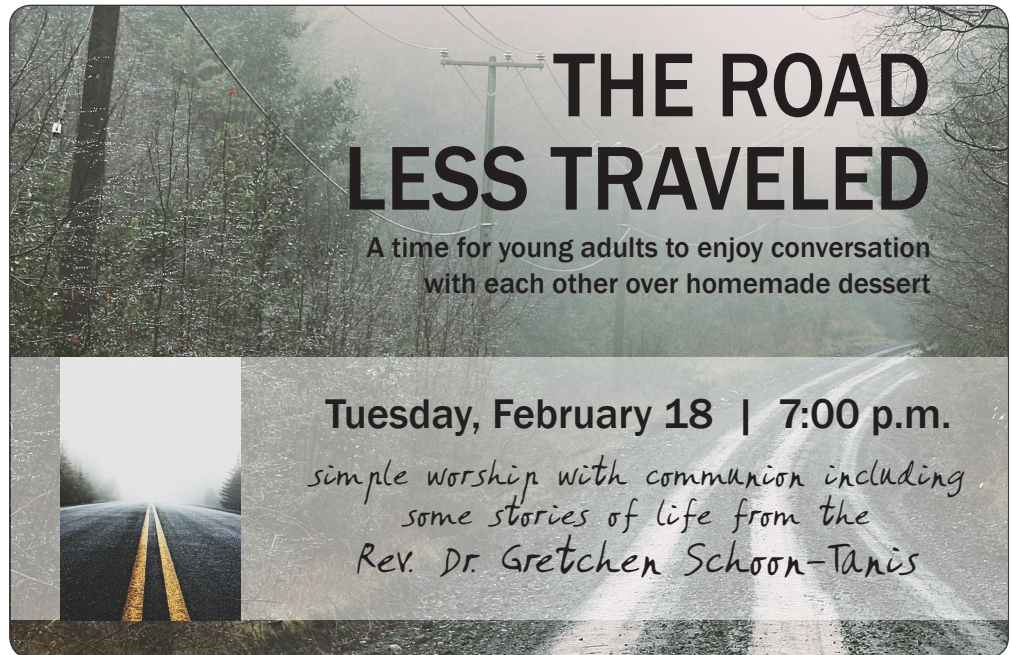
The Walk for Warmth is a way you can specifically help families in need in Ottawa County who have fallen behind on heating bills. This year's Walk takes place on Saturday, February 8. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. (no registration fee) at City on a Hill, 100 Pine Street, in Zeeland. Come and join a brisk 2 mile, well-marked winter walk around downtown Zeeland. Please seek out Norma Killilea if you have questions and join Norma in this local, supportive activity! There will be a table in the Gathering Area on Sunday, February 2 to sign-up or donate to support Hope Church members who will walk.

Hope Church Readers - Feb. 19

Hope Church Readers will meet on Wednesday, February 19th at 1:00 p.m. in Commons 1. A fascinating account of *The Girls of Atomic City* by Denise Kiernan will be discussed, led by Deborah Schakel. Visitors are welcome, along with new members.

Brim Bunch - Feb. 20

Brim Bunch will have a potluck dinner on February 20th at 6:00 p.m.



Bring a dish to pass, or \$8 if that is not possible. Rhonda Edgington, our Hope Church Organist, will explain how the organ works, demonstrate different sounds, play pieces that show off various aspects of our Hope Church instrument and take requests for a hymn sing at the end of her presentation. Don't miss this unique program.

Pizza Sunday - Feb. 23

The next Pizza Sunday will take place on February 23 at 12:15 p.m. Hosts are needed for 2014! Please sign up in the Gathering Area.

Mardi Gras Celebration - Mar. 4

Save the date! This event is for the congregation and is sponsored by PACT. More information coming soon.

Cran Hill Ranch - July 18-20

Save the date! Mark your calendar now for a fun-filled weekend at Cran Hill Camp with your church family.

Summer Camp Applications

Summer will be here sooner than you think! Applications for Camp Geneva and Cran Hill Ranch are available outside the church office. These Michigan RCA camps offer wonderful opportunities to meet new friends, have fun and adventure, and draw closer to God. Pick up your application soon to participate in the camp experience! Scholarships are available for families of 5th graders. Contact Pastor Gordon in the church office for more information.

Co-Ed Softball Coach Needed

The Hope Church Softball Team is in need of a new coach. If you are interested in coaching, please call the church office at (616) 392-7947 or email office@HopeChurchRCA.org. "Know Hope" (the team's motto) will have "more hope" if you become a part of the team!

and finally...

Someone commented to me recently that she loves January at Hope Church because that is when we get to hear people's testimonies about how they have experienced reconciliation. I couldn't agree more. Hearing people share their Witness to Reconciliation in our sanctuary service is not only a highlight of the Season of Reconciliation, but if you were listening at the annual meeting on January 19th, it is one of the highlights of the year!

Manuscripts of these testimonies will be shared with the congregation as they are available (see page 2). You can also listen online by going to the "Archives" page of the Hope Church website.

I am awed by the magnificent creativity of the Spirit who is forever helping us find a way where there is no way when it comes to healing from pain and finding peace after brokenness. I am equally awed by the courage and wisdom present in the members of our congregation.

Scripture demands that we be a people of reconciliation. This is why Jesus came and it is the ministry he has handed over to us:

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation..."
2 Corinthians 5.17-18

This is mandated work and it is some of the most difficult work there is. I suspect that is why we all take such encouragement from hearing how people are finding their way through it.

The themes of the Season of Reconciliation inevitably cover a wide range of concerns since brokenness touches every square inch of creation and every aspect of human life. The adult education series has been focused on violence in our society and families. The small group book study group has been diving into the writings of Oscar Romero. The Restorative Circle Facilitator Training will offer tools to strengthen people's capacities to listen and collaborate around conflict. In past years we have looked at issues of poverty and hunger. We have a list of topics we want to explore in the future as well.

One of the places our Reconciliation ministry continues to work is in our community conversation around race. We have been attending and tracking a series of community forums this past year looking to identify root causes of racial injustice here in Holland and mobilize to address those causes. It hasn't been easy. Talking about race never is. If you look at the minutes from the 2013 General Synod meeting of the RCA (you all do that in your spare time, right?), you will see that we heard several reports from two different task forces working on these issues in our denomination.

One of the commitments of the RCA is to live into a "multiracial future freed from racism." And as you listen to the reports of these task forces they are raising our awareness that we must address white privilege if we are

"I am awed by the magnificent creativity of the Spirit who is forever helping us find a way where there is no way when it comes to healing from pain and finding peace after brokenness."

going to get anywhere in dismantling the lingering effects of racism. All of us agree that racism is sinful. All of us can stand up and cheer for the goal of racial equality. What is much harder to address are the root causes that are keeping us from those goals.

Rev. Denise Kingdom Grier has invited some of us from the community to join her at the White Privilege Conference in Madison, WI which will be held March 26-29. I am planning to attend as part of my continuing education for this year and welcome anyone who might be interested in joining me to contact me. Early registration is due by February 24th*.

I look forward to the way this conference will keep pushing me deeper into this lifelong work of reconciliation in ways that challenge and intimidate me but also inspire me. I wonder where your journey will take you. Let's keep sharing those stories!

Peace to you,
Pastor Jill

*Please keep in mind that there are fees for the event as well as travel and hotel costs involved. You can read more about the conference at WhitePrivilegeConference.com.

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Hope Church News

February 2014



Kids Hope Students Look Forward to Summer Camp

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



In January, Hope Church Kids Hope expressed our thanks and appreciation to all of our currently active mentors, substitute mentors and prayer partners with a dinner. This is a yearly event that is intended to promote fellowship and team building. Part of what we do is help each other by problem solving and

discussing things that have worked for us.

On another note, we are beginning the process which enables many of our Vanderbilt Kids Hope students to spend a week at Camp Geneva. Thanks to many generous donors, Camp Geneva is able to provide large scholarships to Kids Hope campers who are entering grades 4-6 in the fall.

We ask the parents of our Kids Hope students to provide \$50 towards camp costs if they are able to do so, and our very supportive congregation has made a commitment to provide

the remaining funds necessary for overnight campers. The congregation also enables us to offer scholarships to our Kids Hope children who are entering grades 2-3 to attend Day Camp.

We are so grateful that we can provide our Vanderbilt students with this chance to make new friends and grow in their spiritual commitment, sense of independence, social skills, and self-esteem. We know we cannot do it without you. Thanks for being a part of our Hope Church Kids Hope Team and for your generous gifts, which make this opportunity to share God's love possible.