



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 57, No. 3

March 2014

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Insert: March Calendar

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



From Darkness to (In)Sight The Season of Lent at Hope Church



Mandala by Rachelle Oppenhuizen.

The theme "From Darkness to (In)Sight" is taken from the texts we will be hearing from the lectionary throughout the Season of Lent. As Jesus encounters people throughout the gospel in a variety of settings, he helps each one find their way from their spiritual darkness to deeper insight.

The Lent series this year will include several worship services and one intergenerational event all designed to help us grow in insight as we reflect on God's Word together. Lent devotionals for adults, youth and families will be available in the gathering area beginning on Sunday, March 2.

Wednesday Evening Series

Nursery care will be provided.

March 5

Ash Wednesday

6:00 p.m. Simple Meal
7:00 p.m. Worship Service

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 of reflection.

March 12

6:00 p.m. Simple Meal
6:40 p.m. *Exploring
Mandalas as a Means of
Reflection*

This intergenerational program will be led by Rachelle Oppenhuizen who will share a brief introduction to mandalas that will be easily accessible to children and adults.

March 19 & 26

7:00 p.m. Worship Service

Worship in the commons will include several cycles of scripture, music, prayer and meditation. During the meditation time, materials will be available to create mandalas as a means of reflecting on the themes of worship.

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

The Season of Lent at Hope Church

Continued from page 1

March 6 - April 10

**Compassionate Connection
Small Group**

7 p.m. Thursdays, Garden Lounge

This 6-week Lenten renewal group will explore Richard Rohr's, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for our True Self*. Facilitated by the Rev. Randy Smit, participants are invited to be re-enchanted with their own humanity, explore communion practices, and live authentically. A suggested donation of \$60 will contribute to the ministries of Compassionate Connection.

Additional Opportunities

Sunday, March 9

**Healing Prayer Service
10 a.m. in the Sanctuary**

People are invited to share in this liturgy of healing prayer, and are offered the opportunity to come forward to share in prayer with one of the elders or pastors if desired. People are also invited to write down prayer concerns in the weeks leading up to the Service, and those concerns will be included in the litany for healing.

The Cross Shop: Finding Healing at the Intersection

The Health Ministry offers this space during Lent for people to take a cross and write a word or name that represents a place in your life or someone you know who needs healing, hope, forgiveness, guidance, or grace. As you leave that cross in the cross shop for the season, the community will be lifting those needs up in prayer.

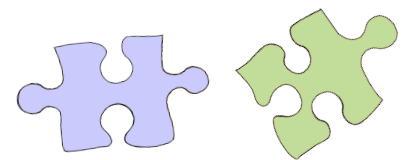
Consistory Corner: February 2014

Consistory discussed at length the Capital Campaign for the renovation project. Guests for the first half of the scheduled Consistory meeting included both the Capital Campaign Feasibility Committee and the Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee. Also in attendance was a representative

from Elzinga & Volkers Construction to help answer any technical questions. The congregational feedback from the informational meeting held in January was used as a way to guide the discussion. The Consistory expressed its thanks to those who elected to provide feedback.

Pastor Jill Russell gave an update of the progress of the Pastoral Residency program. It has been approved at several levels, and we are now awaiting approval from the Lily Endowment. This should come in time to allow for an April 1st start date.

ADULT EDUCATION
Sundays, 9:40-10:40 a.m., Commons



March 16, 23, 30 & April 6, 13

The Forgiving Victim: Theology of James Alison & Rene Girard

Led by Pastor Gordon Wiersma and Curtis Gruenler

In recent years Curtis Gruenler and Pastor Gordon Wiersma have read extensively, appreciated greatly, and dialogued enjoyably about the work of two contemporary theologians, Rene Girard and James Alison. Gordon focused on reading James Alison during his recent sabbatical (the work of James Alison is based on the theology of Rene Girard) and Curtis has been part of a group meeting with James Alison to develop a new curriculum for churches based on Alison's theology. Believing there are important insights and rich gifts present in the theology of Girard and Alison, this

course will summarize the main themes of their work and discuss the implications for faith and practice as individuals and as a church. Topics include:

- **March 16** – Imitation and Revelation: Human History Through a Resurrection Lens
- **March 23** – Atonement: Violence Unmasked and Life Revealed
- **March 30** – Christian Living: Undergoing God
- **April 6** – Worship & Prayer: Imitating Jesus
- **April 13** – Further discussion of the past 4 weeks!

"I Belong Body and Soul" Painting Comes to Hope Church

Jane R. Dickie, Reconciliation Ministry Member

Have you noticed the new painting on the south wall of the Gathering Area? Have you looked at it from a distance? Have you looked at it close up? As with all original art, it invites us in to explore what is in front of us and what is within us. And best of all, this painting is ours, it belongs to Hope Church. Here's the story:

The weekend of October 24-26, 2013 at Central Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Room for All (RfA) held its biennial national conference. (RfA is the organization that Hope Church is affiliated with which seeks to support, educate and advocate for the welcome and full affirmation of people of all sexual identities and gender expressions in the Reformed Church in America.) At this conference, nationally known artist, Joel Schoon Tanis, led a hands-on "Responding through the Arts" workshop where participants created their own expressive reactions to the things they were seeing and learning at the conference. Some people wrote poetry, quoted scriptures, or created paintings that expressed themes. Working late into the night, Joel skillfully took all of these fragments and wove together the beautiful artistic work you see pictured above.

When the conference was over, the painting was put up for auction on the Room for All website. With generous contributions by Hope Church members, and continuing attention to the bidding, Hope Church won the painting!

Pause to look at the painting. Imagine those at the conference moved to write the words you see. If you have



an opportunity, go to the Room for All website (roomforall.com) and listen to the five minute summary of the conference including worship, keynote speakers and music. Then look at the painting. See if you can imagine the inspiration for the artistic expression before you:

Christ breaks down walls
I will change your name --
You will no longer be called
wounded,
outcast,
lonely,
afraid.

Your new name will be
Child of mine,
Treasured,
Friend of God
Beloved

I belong body and soul
This child of God is now received
engaged to confess the faith of
Christ

LOVE ENDURES
Arms to embrace
Welcome in our diversity
As God Made Us

The next time you are in the Gathering Area, I hope you will take time and imagine yourself fully embraced, totally loved, at home in Hope Church that has Room for All.

You can purchase a print or gallery-type canvas of the original painting and a variety of other products through Lake Effect Digital Imaging in Holland. The catalog and price list are available on the RfA website, but orders can only be placed by calling Vicki at Lake Effect, (616) 928-0250 or vicki@lakeeffectdigital.com. Thanks to Joel Schoon-Tanis, these products will be available at artist's discount prices, with no mark-up or proceeds to RfA.

Caring for Creation: Our Roots and our Future

Hope Church in the Community

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

Dave De Block, Community Ministry Member

Through the Community Ministry, Hope Church supports the Holland Community Health Center. According to our own Dr. Tom Arendshorst, "The Holland Community Health Center does a fabulous job of addressing both current and long-term health care needs of people without the insurance or financial resources to get health care otherwise."



accessible health care regardless of language, cultural barriers, or ability to pay.

The Holland Community Health Center (HCHC) opened in 1995 to provide primary care for uninsured and under-insured individuals and families in the Holland area. Driven by the philosophy that high quality health care is the right of all people, this full-service, nonprofit facility offers comprehensive, affordable and

The staff of the Community Health Center cares for more than 400 patients a month – 4,800 visits a year. The Center serves a diverse population: 42% children, 40% White, 40% Latino, about 49% with Medicaid or Medicare, 23% with insurance, and 28% paying for services, in full or in part, themselves. Most frequent services are immunizations for

children, well-child, preventative check-ups, and diabetes care.

Holland Hospital holds responsibility for the Community Health Center property and provides significant annual financial support for the Health Center's programs and services, as part of its mission to improve the health of the community in the spirit of hope, compassion, respect, and dignity. In 2004, Holland Hospital partnered with Grand Rapids-based Michigan Medical, PC to bring additional services and support to the Health Center. Combined, this partnership provides hundreds of thousands of dollars of support to the area's most vulnerable patients.

Connecting with At-Risk Youth

Outreach & Hospitality Ministry

Over the past several months, the Outreach and Hospitality Ministry has been researching ministries and programs that serve at-risk youth in the Holland community. The Ministry would like to inform Hope Church members of a new program, Holland Youth Connections, and ways to get involved.

Last summer, 12 at-risk teens (14-17 years old) participated in Holland Youth Connections where they worked on two teams doing hands-on work for the City Parks Department and Holland Public Schools. The teens worked limited hours that amounted to earning \$100 per week for 10 weeks. At the end of the program, many of the youths said it changed their lives and six were able to find permanent

jobs. The program has been praised as a worthwhile investment in the youth of our community that replaces drugs, alcohol and gangs with opportunity.

Program leaders are now looking to expand from 12 youths to 120. But to provide jobs for 120 teens, area employers will need to sign on to mentor a team of youths, and people are needed to sponsor the teens. If you would like to become a sponsor or if you are able to be a mentor by providing work experience at your business/organization, please contact Angie in the church office at agriffore@hopechurchrca.org or (616) 392-7947. Sponsor/Mentor pledge forms are also available at the Welcome Desk in the Gathering Area.

Additional Outreach Opportunities with At-Risk Youth

ESCAPE Ministries

An Urban Teen and Young Adult
Leadership Program
(616) 796-0538
escape-out.org

Hope College CASA Program

Children's After School Achievement
(616) 395-7944
hope.edu/admin/casa

Good Samaritan Ministries

(616) 392-7159
goodsamministries.com

WALKING THE PATH OF RECONCILIATION

Season of Reconciliation 2014

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.

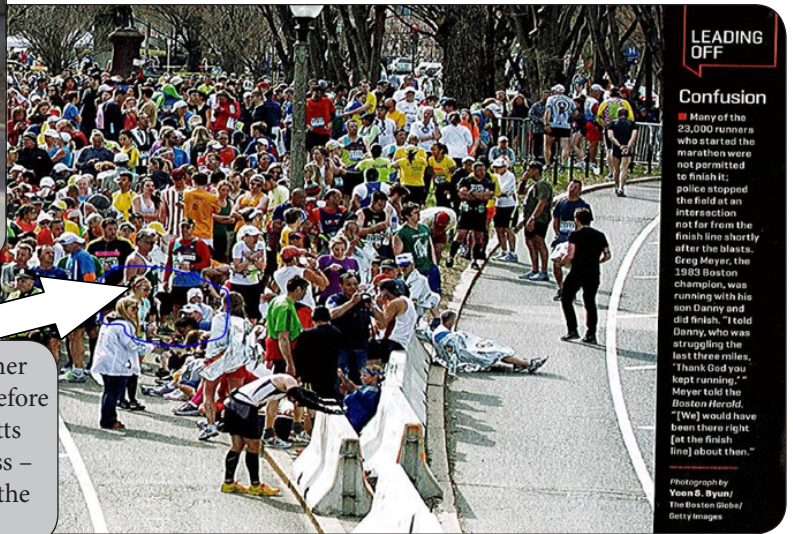
Witness to Reconciliation: *Reconciliation and the Boston Marathon*

Dr. Virginia Beard, from January 19, 2014

Reconciliation – I was torn when asked what example to share as I have been part of and worked on reconciliation in racial reconciliation in the United States, ethnicity in Kenya, and political faith in Northern Ireland. But to make my talk both personal and more generalizable, I decided to stick with my own journey in intrapersonal conflict and reconciliation I was asked to talk about – participating in the 2013 Boston Marathon. This experience I see as part of a grander narrative on identity in Christ, needed justice for all in our country and hope found in the perfect life metaphor of training for and running a marathon.



Virginia with other stopped runners before the Massachusetts Avenue underpass – half a mile from the finish line.



LEADING OFF

Confusion

Many of the 29,000 runners who started the marathon were not permitted to finish it; police stopped the field at an intersection not far from the finish line shortly after the blasts. Greg Meyer, the 1983 Boston champion, was running with his son Danny and did finish. "I told Danny, who was struggling the last three miles, 'Thank God you kept running.' " Meyer told the Boston Herald. "[We] would have been there right [at the finish line] about then."

Photograph by
Yoon S. Hyun/
The Boston Globe/
Getty Images

April 15, 2013 was a painful culmination to the start of my worst year as a long distance runner since I started in 2009. After a training season plagued by fatigue, burnout and persistent minor (but impeding) injuries, I ran the Boston marathon with an injured right knee and a devastated spirit shrouded in struggles with identity and disappointment. I had taken nearly three weeks off from running right before the marathon to try and let my knee heal, so had missed the sport I loved and was still in pain. And running a marathon with an injury I knew meant compounding pain and injury – and it did. My hope in that run was the finish line. I mean,

I wanted to enjoy the experience as I had two years earlier in my first Boston marathon, but my pain, fear and impeded training predicted finishing itself would be the highlight of the race. And I had elatedly crossed the finish line in 2011 to amazing volunteers and a sense of accomplishment and growth that was physical, emotional and spiritual. Crossing that finish line last year was to be a redemption of my rough 4 months of running. It was to be a reconciliation of the hurt and disappointment with the possibility of renewal. And we had two more turns – run under the Massachusetts avenue underpass, turn right onto Hereford and left onto Boylston, and ride the elation of cheers and achievement across the finish line. It was half a mile

away. And we were stopped.

People died, people were injured, people's souls were crushed. I started crying that day and it took over a month before I could stop. I cried for myself, for those injured or who lost loved ones, whose own wounds were real and persistent, and those whose wounded identities and souls led them to perpetrate such painful actions. For me, I was grappling with failure – real or perceived – physical pain, fear – all in a big mess of a weight that only quit threatening to drown me at St. Columbo's Bay, Iona, Scotland. I left 2 ½ weeks after Boston to help lead a group of students on a Hope College May term course, "Conflict, Peace and

Continued on page 7.

Continued from page 6.

Reconciliation in a Celtic Context – a reflective journey through Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland.” I was a 35 year old, married without children, marathon female – and prayed to find a new friend during our residence week on the Isle of Iona at a 600 year old abbey with fewer than 100 people. Then thought such a hope was ridiculous. But God knows what we need and I believe can place unexpected hopes in our hearts that He plans to fulfill. Wendy – a 35 year old, also childless, marathon runner from Northern Ireland was the only person in my generation on the island that week. And she was leading conversations on poverty, development and global interactions for us. Topics on which I teach and research. Wendy also had her marathon finish line stolen – in her case, by nature – she had trained in celebration of five years cancer free and her 35th birthday (one month after mine!) for the New York marathon in the fall of 2012. A marathon canceled days before it was to be held due to the devastation of “superstorm” Sandy. We shared in words and in understandings beyond words the disappointment, the ensuing physical injuries (she had tapered and then ran a marathon a few weeks later not quite ready for it and ended up with a knee injury), and the lessons that training for a marathon had brought us. We cried together and laughed together. And that was the real start to my own intrapersonal healing, peace and reconciliation. As part of the pilgrimage across the island we were on, we were to throw a stone representing a significant burden in our life into the Bay – releasing it symbolically to God. That conversation allowed me to throw a bulk of the weight into the lapping sea

of St. Columbo’s Bay.

As I threw the heaviest, smoothest stone representing that pain into the Bay, God replaced it – again with hope – the uncertainty and pain were not entirely gone, but the hope of renewal was heavier. I had a renewed perspective. I had prayed in the same opening session in which I prayed for a new real friend about wanting to run again. My physical pain was still acute and I was deeply afraid I would never



heal – perhaps irrational – but I had faced so much physical and emotional pain...

After I had thrown my rock in the Bay, an amazing woman from the Netherlands – she was part of a Dutch group also doing a week residential at Iona – came up and began chatting a bit with me. You see, earlier in the week, after a healing service when I shared my injuries and my heart’s desire to run free again...she had cried

with me. Well, on the pilgrimage, she brought me a stone, black and rough on one side and shiny on the other (pain and beauty, loss and hope together) and said, “God is with you. You will run again.” She told me she will be praying for me and our group. She was an amazing lady - even though I speak NO Dutch and her English was wonderful but a second language. It was a bond of the heart.

In a place dedicated to the pursuit and understanding of peace and reconciliation, God brought the largest steps towards my own reconciliation, forgiveness (of myself and others), and hope. It was on Iona that I learned that the Boston Athletic Association decided to let non-finishers from 2013 run again in 2014 – regardless of gaining a new qualifying time – something I did not think I could do given my injuries. Wendy was the first person I told – I ran across the island with the email on my phone, and thrust it in her hands when I found her – it was our last day there and we were getting ready to board the ferry back to the mainland. She read it, and silently tears sprang to her eyes and we embraced. God gave me someone to share that profound step with who would understand and even share the feelings I was experiencing.

So April 21, 2014, I will run the Boston Marathon again – a tangible, symbolic restoration will occur – and as I hit that last half mile and cross the finish line, I believe a circle of reconciliation will find a type of completion.

Reconciliation is a journey, a process, but also has times of completion and fulfillment.

Kids Hope Program, Connecting with Community for 11 Years

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

The Hope Church Kids Hope Program is now in its 11th year working to meet the needs of grade school children who are deemed to be at-risk. Over the years, the program has gone through many different funding changes.

Currently, the staff salaries paid to Co-Directors, Anne Duinkerken and Barbara Joldersma, are paid from Benevolence. This was decided a number of years ago as a reflection of the direct service to our community. This year, the program budget was shifted from an off-budget fund to the Benevolence budget as well.

Additionally, the program continues to fund summer camp attendance through a scholarship fund. 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. This has been a very meaningful program for our Vanderbilt students and their families. Many students express their gratitude for the days they spend at camp, learning, growing, and sharing their faith.

The Kids Hope scholarship fund is

always in need of donations. If you would like to make a donation to the Hope Church Kids Hope Program, please call the church office at (616) 392-7947. Your donation will allow the program to continue to connect Hope Church with our community in a direct and important way!

Youth Ministry Update

Anne Duinkerken, Youth Ministry Director



Fish Club

Fish Club had an amazing time at Sky Zone on February 2. The building is full of trampolines and the kids were literally bouncing off the walls!

On Saturday, February 15, seven fish clubbers and four sponsors got up early to help at “Pancakes R Us”, a group of volunteers that work out of Western Seminary’s kitchen to feed about 200 people in need. The group enjoyed interacting with the other volunteers, serving food, eating food, having conversations with those who came to get a hot breakfast, and even

cleaning up!

In March, Fish Club looks forward to the “Hillbilly Olympic Games” (something new that Leah Buckley came up with), and making care packages for our college students. The group is usually able to fill about 30 boxes with food and fun things and can always use donations. Please bring any donations for these care packages to the church office before Sunday, March 16.

High Hopes

High Hope’s annual retreat at Cran Hill Ranch looked quite different this year. With a major snowstorm hitting the Friday they were scheduled to

depart, the group decided to stay at church overnight and attempt to make the trip on Saturday. Despite the change of plans, the youth and sponsors had a good time Friday night; enjoying lots of food, conversation, games, a movie, and devotions. They awoke on Saturday morning to a foot of new snow, wind and cold. Given the conditions, they enjoyed a pancake breakfast, more games, and devotions at the church, then headed home to stay safe and warm.

High Hopes looks forward to enjoying an evening of “Unplugged” on March 9, and helping at “Pancakes R Us” on March 22.

Organ Concert Benefits Red Cord Community

Rhonda Sider Edgington will present her now-annual spring organ concert on **Sunday, March 30 at 3:00 p.m. at Hope Church.** "Everyone Dance!" is a program of organ music written in the last 25 years. Taken from the title of one of Calvin Hampton's *Five Dances for Organ Solo* (which will be played), the program will be full of organ music that is influenced by the music and times in which we live.

Through written and spoken program notes, Rhonda will help audience members understand the musical influences and extra-musical connections. Rhonda hopes to show people that "contemporary organ music" doesn't necessarily mean something off-putting or foreign to our ears. It's not all music for dancing either, but is, in turn, joyful, sombre, reflective, dramatic, pensive, even humorous.

The concert will benefit the Red Cord Community, a new organization in West Michigan founded by Rhonda's friend, Lorilyn Wiering. The Red Cord Community is dedicated to the formation of a two-year residential community for women who have survived prostitution, trafficking, addiction and abuse. Lorilyn will share some of her inspiring vision for this community, and ways in which others can become involved.



Because this is a benefit concert for the Red Cord Community, half of the pieces that will be performed in the program are written by women, something that is somewhat of an anomaly for classical concerts today. Rhonda points this out, not because pieces written by women are necessarily any better or worse than those written by men, but because the Red Cord Community is all about sharing our gifts; and the concert program is intended to reflect that as well.

Come ready to be surprised by the variety of sounds and inspirations possible with organ music today, and come ready to learn more about the Red Cord Community!

Thank You

*Dear Hope Church congregation:
Happiness is hearing from friends.
Thanks so much for making my
birthday a happy one. Cape Cod has
had a lot of snow. No problem as I am
a native of Indiana! Blessings.
-Dorothy Robinson*

*Members of Hope Church:
Thank you for a wonderful Christmas!
We are so grateful for all that you gave
to make our Christmas a little brighter!
Thank you very much!
-Felicia and Destinee (former 10th
Street House residents)*

At Home With the Word

Daily Bible Readings from the
Revised Common Lectionary

March 3-9

Monday	Exodus 33:7-23
Tuesday	1 Kings 19:9-18
Wednesday	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
<i>Ash Wednesday</i>	
Thursday	Jonah 3:1-10
Friday	Jonah 4:1-11
Saturday	Psalm 51
Sunday	Matthew 4:1-11
<i>First Sunday in Lent</i>	

March 10-16

Monday	Hebrews 2:10-18
Tuesday	Psalm 32
Wednesday	Matthew 18:10-14
Thursday	Isaiah 51:1-3
Friday	Romans 3:21-31
Saturday	Isaiah 51:4-8
Sunday	John 3:1-17

March 17-23

Monday	Numbers 21:4-9
Tuesday	Psalm 128
Wednesday	Ezekiel 36:22-32
Thursday	Colossians 1:15-23
Friday	Exodus 16:9-21
Saturday	Exodus 16:27-35
Sunday	John 4:5-42

March 24-30

Monday	2 John 1-13
Tuesday	Psalm 81
Wednesday	Jeremiah 2:4-13
Thursday	Ephesians 4:25-32
Friday	Ephesians 5:1-9
Saturday	Psalm 23
Sunday	John 9:1-41

March 31 - April 6

Monday	Acts 9:1-20
Tuesday	Isaiah 42:14-21
Wednesday	Psalm 146
Thursday	Revelation 10:1-11
Friday	Psalm 130
Saturday	Ezekiel 36:8-15
Sunday	Ezekiel 37:1-14

Events and Announcements

Beginning Yoga Class begins Feb. 27

This 5-week series is perfect for people new to the practice of yoga as well as for the more seasoned students who want to review the basics. Classes will meet on Thursdays, Feb. 27-March 27, from 6:00-7:15pm p.m. in Room 106. Please bring your own yoga mat, a blanket, blocks if you have them, and a strap or soft belt. There is a suggested \$50 donation for the whole series. Contact the church office to sign up or if you have questions.

Small Group Opportunity - Mar. 2

Seminary intern, Paige Convis, wants to start an ongoing small group and is wondering who is interested in embarking on such a journey! This small group will be a space of community, study, rest and support. So who is in? Come to a short meeting after 11:00 a.m. worship on March 2nd in the library to brainstorm together. This meeting is not a full commitment to this small group but for more information and a chance to think together about the future and what a small group might look like.

Mardi Gras Celebration - Mar. 4

Mardi Gras is an exciting celebration in many parts of the world. This is traditionally a time of last chance merrymaking before the disciplines of Lent. This year we are going to spend an evening together for a time of celebration ourselves. Tuesday, March 4th from 6-7:30 p.m. everyone (of all ages) is invited to come enjoy a pancake dinner and many fun activities including a parade with bead necklaces, noise makers, masks and games for the children. There will also be a time for reflection as we prepare for the season of Lent. Please sign up in the Gathering Area so that we'll be sure to have an extravagant amount of food and craft material as befitting

a Mardi Gras celebration. Come and enjoy!

Hope Church Readers - Mar. 19

Hope Church Readers will meet on Wednesday, March 19 at 1:00 p.m. in Commons 1. The book for discussion will be *Abide with Me* by Elizabeth Strout. Discussion will be led by Kay Hubbard. The final two books for the year will be, *New and Selected Poems, Volume 1* by Mary Oliver in April and, *My Beloved World* by Sonia Sotomayor in May. Visitors are most welcome!

New Member Class begins Mar. 23

A New Member Class will begin for people who are exploring possible membership at Hope Church. The class will meet on three Sunday mornings (March 23, 30, and April 6) at 9:40 a.m. Additionally, a meal and meeting with the Board of Elders for those wishing to join Hope Church will occur on April 13 after the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Public reception will take place during the 11:00 a.m. worship service on May 4. If you would like more information, please contact Pastor Jill Russell, Pastor Gordon Wiersma, or the church office. Please know that attending the New Members Classes only indicates your possible interest in joining our fellowship, not your actual decision to do so.

Meet New Missionaries - Mar. 30

On Sunday, March 30 stop by the Deacons table in the Commons during Pizza Sunday to meet our new RCA missionaries, Marlin and Sally Vis. Hope Church is supporting them for the first time in 2014 and they will be here to share about their ministry in Israel/Palestine.

March Birthdays

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

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

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

and finally...

Conclusion: **do something different for Lent.**

So here's how I got to that conclusion. I am an avowed convert to the liturgical year. I'm a convert in the sense that I grew up in a church with a basic sense of the church seasons, but then in seminary and as a pastor I've come to deeply appreciate the purpose and meaning of the church living according to this calendar.

And what I think is most important about the liturgical calendar is simply that it is different than the other calendars of our lives: monthly, fiscal, school, sports and groups, seasons, daily schedule, family schedule, work schedule. It's not that I mean to be contrarian – there's nothing inherently wrong with those calendars – but the liturgical year is a way to remind us that those markings of time and schedules are not the only thing, or the true thing, with which to define and pattern our lives.

As the liturgical calendar begins at Advent and brings us through the stories of God and the life of Jesus, it makes an ongoing claim on us that God's presence in the world and God's love and grace in Christ is the lens through which we see ourselves and others and our world. That claim is at times in sync with our other calendars and at times a stark contrast to them, so the liturgical calendar is an ongoing way to remember who and whose we are in the midst of all the other times and patterns of our lives.

And so as a fervent liturgical year adherent, I of course need to point out that in March, Lent is upon us (a late Lent this year, but those variations are part of what's interesting about the liturgical year). And as the coming weeks will take us through the cultural seasons of...Spring (I do believe it will come!), St. Patrick's Day, "March Madness", Spring Break, April Fools' Day, and tax day!...the season of Lent to Holy Week that brings us to Easter offers us a different way to mark our lives in the midst of it all. And that simply means it can be important and meaningful to do something yourself, with your spouse/partner, with your family, to mark this season of Lent as part of your calendar.

Here are some ways to do that:

- Attend Early Worship, Adult Ed and 11:00 a.m. worship (some people do come to all 3!).
- Attend Ash Wednesday worship on March 5.
- Participate in the small group offered by Compassionate Connections starting on March 6.
- Attend the Wednesday evening series on March 12, with mandalas to make for all!
- Use the Lenten devotionals provided, with materials for individuals, families, children.
- Give up something for Lent (often a favorite food, or TV show, or alcohol) as spiritual discipline (but Sundays can be 'feast days'!).
- For a different tack on "giving up", work on letting go of something such as resentment, or envy, or self-doubt (no feast days for those! ☺).
- Instead of giving up, give *to* a cause that makes others' lives better.
- Take time to pray.
- Take time to be quiet.
- Read a poem (one provided below for your convenience).

So, in conclusion: **do something different for Lent.**

Peace,
Pastor Gordon

Imperatives - Part 2 of Mysteries of the Incarnation by Kathleen Norris

*Look at the birds
Consider the lilies
Drink ye all of it*

*Ask
Seek
Knock
Enter by the narrow gate*

*Do not be anxious
Judge not;
do not give dogs what is holy*

*Go: be it done for you
Do not be afraid
Maiden, arise
Young man, I say, arise*

*Stretch out your hand
Stand up, be still
Rise, let us be going...*

*Love
Forgive
Remember me*

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The Importance of Being Prepared

Donita Robards, RN, Parish Nurse

Most of us have heard the old motto, "Be prepared." In the event of an emergency, how prepared are you? Many people believe they are ready because they know what to do. Knowing what to do, doesn't mean we have taken the time to make a plan or gather supplies.

Perhaps you are wondering why you should get prepared for an event that may never happen. We haven't had any winter storms that prevented us from getting out of our homes for more than a day or two in recent years. The road crews seem to keep up fairly well, and the stores have reopened after a day. We also haven't had any major disasters in our area. But the sad truth is, our country has seen a few disasters in recent years,

and people were not ready to deal with them. While most people were likely aware that it's a good idea to have food and water on hand in the event of an emergency, many of them had not taken the proper measures to prepare for the unexpected disasters.

After the events of Hurricane Katrina, FEMA set a new standard. It is no longer just a good idea to have a few supplies on hand in case of an emergency; it is now the standard. It is now each person's responsibility to have enough food and water to provide for themselves for at least 3-5 days after a major event.

In light of the new standard, it is important to deliberately consider the individual needs of your own



family. Do you have small children or babies? Do you have an elderly parent to care for? Is anyone on oxygen or other equipment that requires electricity? What about medication, such as insulin?

Hopefully we will never have to depend on a stockpile of goods in our own home to survive. Yet, it is still good to plan ahead and make a list of what you would need. For additional information, go to ready.gov.