



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 57, No. 10

November 2014

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Inserts:

- November Calendar
- Lectionary
- Restorative Circles Facilitator List

The deadline for the December newsletter is Monday, Nov. 10.

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



Thanksgiving Offering to Support Launch of Neighborhood Programs



About six blocks south of Hope Church, a house has been renovated to become Nuestra Casa (or "our house"), a neighborhood center for social and educational activities, and a place where community can be built, one relationship at a time. The Nuestra Casa building is owned by our RCA partner, New Community Fourth Reformed Church. The renovation has been all-volunteer, including support from a number of Hope

Church members. Westcore Neighbors, the southern neighbor of Washington School Neighbors, will oversee the programs and operation at Nuestra Casa.

Our Thanksgiving gifts, presented to Westcore Neighbors designated for Nuestra Casa, will ensure a meaningful launch of the neighborhood center, paying operating expenses for several months as they break new ground with community engagement in a shared space.

Check out the Nuestra Casa website at: <http://nuestracasathegatheringplace.wordpress.com/>

On the Nuestra Casa website, this vision is given:

"We hope Nuestra Casa/The Gathering Place will create "pride of place" and a gathering place for our residents who live among so many abandoned homes, as well as encourage future revitalization projects in the City of Holland."

Thanksgiving Eve

Worship Service

Wednesday, November 26

7:00 p.m.

We will gather together to ask the Lord's blessing and to give thanks. Come join in a service of song, prayer, and communion as we remember the goodness of God.

December, January & February Greeters

The Outreach & Hospitality Ministry

The following list reflects the households assigned to greet prior to the 11am service for the next three months:

December Greeters

07 Jeff & Cathy Green
14 Kristen Hintz & Ellen Hale
21 Steve & Sue Griffore
28 Curtis & Lezlie Gruenler

January Greeters

04 Steve & Michael Hopkins
11 Peter & Carole Hintz
18 David & Ruth Hawley-
Lowry
25 Kurt & Sharon Hopkins

February Greeters

01 James & Jacqueline Heisler
08 Michael & Kathy Henry
15 Dana and Adam Whitman
22 Emily Hutchinson & Libby
Hillegonds

If you are unable to greet on your assigned Sunday, you are invited to either switch with someone or find your own substitute. You can communicate this change by marking the change on the Greeters Schedule poster in the Gathering Area, or by calling the office and a staff member will mark the change for you.

Washington School Neighbors Update

Andrew Spidahl & Janelle Lopez-Koolhaas, Neighborhood Connectors



Washington School Neighbors

Washington School Neighbors Garden

As winter moves ever closer, volunteers will be winterizing the Neighborhood Garden beds by weeding and preparing the soil for the cold weather. We hope to have some family gatherings at the site in the months ahead: Christmas caroling, snowman-building or even creating a snow fort.

Tool Shed Donations Needed

As we draw to a close on this growing season, the WSN gardens are looking for a few items for their tool shed for next time. Do you have one of the following items in working order that you would consider donating? [Lawnmower, wheel barrow, cart, garden shovel, 5 gal buckets...or any other garden tools] Please contact Andrew or Janelle - 616-392-7947 ext 108. Thanks!

Using Online Tools Effectively

Washington School Neighbors has encouraged its residents to join nextdoor.com, a site that allows neighbors to interact online. The number of those who have joined grows daily and is a place to share not only community issues but personal concerns and joys that are of interest

to the whole neighborhood.

Washington School Open House

We are working toward having a Farewell/Open House event for neighbors and alumni families of the Washington School sometime before it is turned over to its future owners/developers. It would provide a time of closure for former students, while bringing together residents and friends for an evening of socializing. We are communicating with the Board of Education about the possibility of our moving forward with plans. Stay tuned.

ADULT EDUCATION

Sundays, 9:40–10:40 a.m. in Commons I

November 2-23: Holistic/Integrative Health and Healing

Creating health is a multidimensional process, combining physical, emotional, spiritual, nutritional, environmental spheres and more. This four part class is designed to further create an atmosphere of hope, health and healing in our church community. It will draw on contributions from several members of Hope Church. The class is taught/coordinated by Jean McFadden, retired professor of Social Work. Christ's healings will frame the series.

November 2: The Healing Ministry of Jesus

Pastor Jill Russell will consider the spiritual healings of Jesus, with emphasis on the compassion of his ministry. There will be discussion of spiritual and physical healing as seen in the light of scripture, and our own experience.

November 9: Mind, Body and Spirit - Healing Energy

Jean McFadden with Monica Krimendahl and Ann Anderson will examine the mind, body spirit connection. All models of healing involve some form of belief. A mini overview of Western medical models, and alternative models will be considered. Other cultural models acknowledge the energy in body and mind. There are many forms of healing, but all deal with energy in some form.

Topics covered will be the effect of trauma on the body, yoga as a mental and physical discipline, and the impact

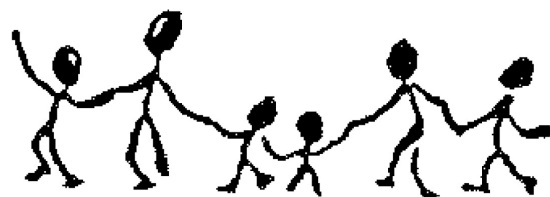
of prayer shawls. All will consider the convergence of mind, body and spirit.

November 16: Creative Arts as a Medium for Healing

Jean McFadden with Rachelle Oppenhuizen and Maxine DeBruyn will explore the ways in which creativity creates a balance of mind, body and spirit. The religious symbolism of the circle will be a theme, as well as the place of creativity, the arts, and beauty in our churches as part of the healing atmosphere. There will be a brief demonstration of creativity for those who care to participate.

November 23: The Environment as a Source of Health and Healing - Bringing It All Together

Peter Boogaart, Julia Brown and Donita Robards will present with Jean McFadden coordinating. We will examine environmental health, food for the spirit, and supports for caregivers. As individuals we will map sources of stress in our environments, and determine how we can add healing energy. How can we as a church community create an even more health-giving environment?



Thanksgiving Turkey Drive

The Community Ministry

IT'S COMING!

IT'S NOVEMBER!



OUR CHANCE to once again aid Community Action House in providing a substantial Thanksgiving box for over a thousand disadvantaged families in our community.

OUR PART will be at the heart of their Thanksgiving dinner- once again think "TURKEYS"! - which will be purchasable at the Turkey Table in the Gathering Area each Sunday of the month.

Bread for the World

Tom Arendhorst, Deacon Ministry



Americans -- nearly 16 million children -- try to survive hunger, and 45 million Americans live in poverty. The average family earns \$4,500 less than before the Great Recession. But ending hunger in America is possible, not an impossible dream.

Bread for the World has researched and developed the 2014 Hunger Report, which urges President Obama and Congress to lead the country in setting a goal to end hunger by 2030, and offers a four-part plan to accomplish this:

1. A jobs agenda
2. A stronger safety net
3. Human capital development
4. Public-private partnerships to support innovative community-led initiatives against hunger

On September 19 members of both parties of the House and Senate introduced the House's Feed the Future Global Food Security Act of 2014 and the Senate's Global Food Security Act of 2014 in order to authorize the Feed the Future Initiative. Feed the Future boosts agricultural development and addresses malnutrition in 20 of the world's poorest countries.

In our United States, more than 49 million

Nearly 1.2 billion people in developing countries live in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.25 a day. Around the world, 805 million people suffer from hunger. In developing countries, 13.5 percent of the population is undernourished. Each year, 2.6 million children die as a result of hunger-related causes.

We live in the world's wealthiest nation. Yet 14.3 percent of U.S. households—a total of 49.1 million Americans, including 15.8 million children—struggle to put food on the table, and more than one in five American children are at risk of hunger.

We can end hunger in our time. Everyone, including the government, must do their part. More people around the world escaped poverty during the 2000s than any other decade in history. By making our voices heard in Congress, we help to ensure laws which are fair and compassionate towards people in need.

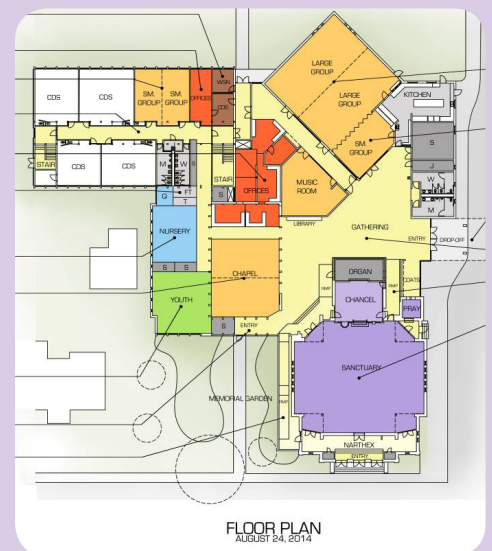
On **Sunday, November 16**, Lois Maassen and Doug Abell will be at hand to help you send letters asking our Congresspersons to support the House's Feed the Future Global Food Security Act of 2014 and the Senate's Global Food Security Act of 2014 in order to authorize the Feed the Future Initiative. Be part of Hope Church's commitment to the fight against hunger and poverty through education, prayer and worship.

Have faith. End hunger.

Renovation and Capital Campaign Team Forms

Consistory voted at its October meeting to contract with Lois Maassen to provide facilitation, communication, and coordination services as Hope Church moves forward with plans for facility renovations and a capital campaign. She will work on behalf of Consistory to assure connections among the capital campaign and design process throughout the project, serving as the liaison for Hope Church with Elevate Studios as the architects and with Elzinga & Volkers as construction management.

Lois will communicate often with the congregation regarding the progress of the project; look for updates in future newsletters and on our website.



Sing a New Song?

Cindi Veldheer DeYoung, Worship, Prayer & Spirituality Ministry

What does it mean to “sing a new song unto the Lord?” (from Psalm 96). I don’t think it’s because God is tired of the old songs, or that we’ve worn down the meaningfulness of songs we know well. Rather, I think the phrase refers to the expressions from a renewed spirit, awakened with new appreciation for God’s providence and care, that erupts into singing and praise. When we experience a fresh dose of God’s care, or receive an insight that refreshes our faith, or feel the Spirit’s nearness carrying us through challenge, we naturally want to direct praise and thanks to God. Singing a new song reminds us that we have new things to learn about God, new ways to experience God’s care and movement. New songs, and the opportunity to learn them, tap into the fun of trying something new. It’s almost like trying a new recipe that turns out to be your favorite meal.

But new hymnals? you ask. New hymnals are ways to expand our language and scope of expression. These particular hymnals include more international songs, which assists us with a sense of faith around the world. New songs tingle our imaginations and souls to see God’s work in new ways, and assist us with a broader vocabulary--musically, verbally, linguistically. Using new hymnals reminds us that God is not static. We may even be awed at new ways of thinking, feeling, and responding to God and to each other in this community of faith.

The current hymnals have served us well. Yes, they’re in very good shape, and will be a terrific gift to the new users. We haven’t worn them out, but we are ready to embrace a new hymnal (or two) because we’ve seen and been inspired by the music, language, and possibilities in the new hymnals.

Why two hymnals, you ask? Consider these comparisons, if you want to review some of the work others have done: http://www.hymnary.org/hymnal_compare?hymnal1=GG2013&hymnal2=LUYH2013

One of the reasons we’ve selected these two hymnals is because they represent the Reformed tradition and they help integrate our faith with music in thoughtful ways, with careful attention to language and theology. The metaphors for God in the new hymnals expand our appreciation for the many ways God makes known God’s character. Imagine (this is not a stretch!) that the only metaphor you used for God was, “Father.” For many people of faith, this title is most precious and encompasses the intimacy of their faith. Others may wince with what seems to be the perpetually exclusive use of that title, and wonder about God’s many other functions and manifestations, like Comforter, Fountain, Word, and Potter.

Our introduction of these new hymnals, and, we hope, the conversation about hymns, music and worship, will continue.

For further reading, you may want to look at these articles: <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2013-04/singing-one-book>

<http://www.presbyterianhymnal.org/PDF/Introducing%20Glory%20to%20God%20to%20Your%20Church.pdf>

<http://www.theologyinworship.com/2014/07/22/reasons-why-we-should-still-be-using-hymnals/>



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 Fellowship Ministry

Marilee Nieuwsma, Fellowship Ministry Chair

If you have ever attended the Kick-Off Picnic in the fall, a craft night during Advent, a simple supper in Lent or a Pizza Sunday you have experienced the Fellowship Ministry at work. The goal of this ministry is to provide opportunities for fun and fellowship among the members and friends of Hope Church. Many intergenerational activities are sponsored throughout the year and often a meal or snack is provided.

Some of the events that the Fellowship Ministry sponsors have become

treasured traditions in our spiritual lives such as the Maundy Thursday Seder. Some activities are just plain fun, for example the coed softball team and weekly volleyball. Some of the events combine fun and spiritual aspects such as Lenten evenings and the bi-yearly weekend family camp outing at CranHill Ranch. This is a long standing tradition which continues to be a treasured time away for our members to interact in a much more casual setting, sharing potluck meals, campfires and concluding with a worship service on Sunday.

The ministry welcomes input and suggestions of new activities or ideas of how to enhance fellowship experiences at Hope Church. New members of this ministry are needed! Anyone interested in joining this ministry or volunteering to help with a specific event i.e. Congregational Meeting Dinner, Easter Brunch or hosting Pizza Sunday, please contact one of the members of the ministry: Kristine Bradfield, Marilee Nieuwsma, Terry Pott, Joyce Teusink, Sally Winchester, Kris Witkowski.

The next Ministry Highlight will feature the Christian Education Ministry.

Kids Hope USA

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

We had a wonderful recruiting period this year and are so happy to announce that Vern Boersma, Dave Dirkse, Jackie Knoll, Barb Knoops, Tim Pennings and Chad Stanley have joined our program as mentors. Additionally Claire Heyboer has returned as a mentor and Signe Johnson, Norma Killilea, Dave Boelkins and Marline VanderWilt have become members of our corps of substitute mentors. New prayer partners are Josh Bochniak, Todd Engle, Maggie Hollis and Loretta Smith. Chad, Maggie and Signe were recruited by Jonathan Brownson as part of our partnership with New Community/Fourth Reformed. Please join us in welcoming all of them to active participation in Kids Hope.

Thanks to our 14 returning mentors

and our six new mentors, we have been able to increase the number of Vanderbilt children with whom we work to 20 which is a number we have not reached in many years! We are grateful for this opportunity and ask for your continued prayers for our program as a whole, our mentors, their prayer partners, and the substitute mentors who are all valuable and necessary parts of our Kids Hope team.

One additional matter for prayer is the fact that despite a really excellent response to our request for new mentors, we have received more referrals from teachers than we can serve at this time. If you are aware of anyone else within the congregation who has been considering the possibility of mentoring, please make

them aware of the three children (a 2nd grade boy, a 3rd grade boy, and a fifth grade boy) on our waiting list. We would be more than happy to provide any new volunteers with one-on-one training. For more information, please call Anne Duinkerken or Barb Joldersma.



Youth Ministry

Beth Jarvis, Youth Ministry Director

"Jesus said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus."

What do toilet plungers, puzzle pieces, Skittles, bowling and corn mazes have to do with this gospel account of Peter walking on the water with Jesus? They were all used with our youth to talk about risk taking this past month. Our theme in both High Hopes and Fish club is risk taking and we have been exploring this idea in a variety of places. In 6th and 7th grade Sunday School we are learning that God initiates relationship with us even though we are far from perfect; the story of Abraham and Sarah in particular illustrating this for us. It is this love, which chooses us in our imperfection, that allows

us to move forward towards God in faith. In Fish Club we are exploring what this relationship means for us in our everyday life. We are learning that because God loves us, we can take risks as we see God's Spirit at work, whether it is to be a friend to the friendless or look for ways as a Fish Club group to care for our community.

In High Hopes, we are exploring similar themes. During our Unshowered events, we are studying a version of Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life* aimed at youth, which teaches us to invite God into our exploration of how we use our time on earth. During our first High Hopes Unplugged meeting, we spent time discussing Peter walking on the

water and what ways God might be inviting us to take risks in our day to day lives too.

We are excited to see how God uses this theme to thread all of our time together, be it our discussions around a bonfire, time raking leaves for a neighbor, or even as we bake pies and Christmas cookies.



Hope Church to Engage in Big Read of *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Judy Parr, Adult Education Ministry

During November Hope College is sponsoring a community-wide reading and discussion of Harper Lee's Pulitzer-prize-winning novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Among events featured are a lecture by Hope College history professor Fred Johnson, a discussion of the book by a panel at Hope Church, and a showing of the film based on the book.

Hope College associate professor Fred Johnson will open the Big Read with a keynote address in Winants Auditorium of Graves Hall on Monday, November 3 from 7 to 9 p.m. Titled, "Bathing in the Sunshine of Despair," his lecture will examine the historical reality that was the foundation and setting for *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

On Wednesday, November 5, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Hope Church Judy Parr will moderate a discussion of the novel. Whether you are a teenager or a golden-ager, whether you've read the book or are beginning to read

it, all are invited to learn more about this masterpiece of American literature. Come with your questions and your comments. We will consider what made the novel an immediate and long-time best seller, examine its themes of innocence and experience, justice and injustice (and more), and reflect on the book's continuing relevance into twenty-first century America.

On Tuesday, November 11, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. the Knickerbocker Theater will show the film version of *To Kill a Mockingbird* starring Gregory Peck. The free film will be followed by discussion at Hops at 84 East 8th Street.

If you are interested, read *To Kill and Mockingbird* and attend events of Holland's Big Read. For more information about other Big Read events in Holland, go to http://www.neabigread.org/communities/?community_id=2198

Events and Announcements

Apple Pies

Fish Club will be making and selling delicious apple pies again this year! Order yours for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and all year! Orders will be taken in the Gathering Area. The cost is \$12 per pie. They will be available the second week in November. Help support our youth in this fundraiser.

Coffee Time at Warm Friend

The next Coffee Time will be at Warm Friend on Tuesday, **November 11, 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. All are welcome!

Circle 4 will meet on Wednesday evening, **November 12 at 7:00 p.m.** Cindi Veldheer DeYoung will host the meeting and Judy Vander Wilt will lead the lesson discussion.

Hope Church Readers

Hope Church Readers will meet on **Wednesday, November 19, at 1:00 P.M.** in the Commons. The book for discussion is **THE UNLIKELY PILGRIMAGE OF HAROLD FRYE** by Rachel Joyce. Leader will be Nancy Rock. Visitors and new members are welcome.

Personal Care Assistants Needed

Hope church elder Randy Smit is looking for personal care assistants. Randy and his wife Jill live about 10 minutes from church and it is their intention to hire two individuals to assist with his daily physical needs. Applicants would need to be strong enough to do daily lifting and bring

a mature capacity for learning and self care/awareness. They are hoping to fill 30-40 hours, evening and daytime positions at \$10 per hour. Jill and Randy are praying for another opportunity to employ an individual in a very rewarding and formative position. Please feel free to contact Randy Smit or the church office.

Jeopardy!

Mark Japinga (son of Hope Church members Jeff & Lynn Japinga) will be on the Jeopardy Tournament of Champions on Friday, Nov. 14.

The church office will be closed on Thursday and Friday, November 27 and 28, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Note: There will not be a **Pizza Sunday** in the month of November.

Haiti Foundation Against Poverty Dinner

Myslene Victor, the cook for HFAP, will be preparing an authentic Haitian meal on Tuesday, November 11, at Neland Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids. Products from the Gift of Hope sewing program, which Hope Church has directly supported, will be available for purchase and there will be a silent auction. The event is from 6:30-8:30, and the cost is \$20 per person in advance or \$25 at the door. Tables for eight can be reserved for \$150. For more information visit the events section of the HFAP website, haitipoverty.org, or contact Ben Sikkink.

November Birthdays

04 Nelis Bade
Care Group: 8

08 Helena Winter
Care Group: 4

10 Donald Buteyn
Care Group: 1

12 Trudy VanderHaar
Care Group: 9

27 Rowland VanEs, Jr.
Care Group: 7

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

Events and Announcements continued

Flowers in Worship

The floral arrangements in the chancel enhance our worship environment on Sundays. Thank you to all who have contributed to the flower fund by designating a Sunday in memory, honor, or celebration of a loved one or special occasion. Check the flower calendar in the Gathering Area and sign up for your special week. The 2015 calendar will be available soon. \$50 is the amount for each week – make checks payable to Hope Church. You can make additional donations to the Worship Flower Fund if you wish. In the



appreciate her artistry. The other months of the year the chancel flowers are provided by Pat's Flower Market in Holland. On occasion, the flowers are taken from the church gardens

summer and fall months, Joyce Stempfly shares the beautiful flowers

of her garden and we

and arranged by David VanHeest or he shares with the congregation one of his orchids that is in bloom. Many thanks to Joyce Teusink for overseeing the flower calendar and making arrangements for bulletin inserts and with the florists.

Early Worship Welcomes You

Early Worship begins at 8:30 a.m. in Commons I. This service offers informal and interactive worship, and encourages people of all ages to participate through music, story, art, drama, and weekly Holy Communion.

Photo Disclaimer

We continue to update photos on the website (www.HopeChurchRCA.org) throughout the year. We won't identify the people in the photographs used on the website except in the staff directory. **If you do not want pictures of yourself or your children to be displayed on the website**, please contact Megan at (616) 392-7947 or marevalo@hopechurchrca.org.



Thank You

To our neighbors at Hope Church,

Greetings! We are so grateful for your Church and your impact and light in our neighborhood! We have been profoundly thankful for your support in many forms. Your congregation's partnership with WSN has come through your many volunteers of all ages, through financial support, and the prayers you regularly offer for the blessing of the homes and blocks around your church. We are constantly grateful for the open doors of Hope for our office space, garden lot, and access to office facilities.

Your remarkable generosity is such a gift to us. Through your sharing--along with that of the other churches, individuals, and businesses that participate in the life of

our neighborhood--we are thrilled to see new friendships formed, vegetables grown and meals shared, and joys and concerns voiced in what is day-by-day becoming a stronger community!

We also know that there is more work to be done, and we look forward to continuing to grow as Washington School Neighbors! We hope that you have felt your participation to be meaningful and that you will continue to join with us in the pursuit of lasting, genuine community in the core of Holland.

*-Andrew Spidahl and Janelle Lopez-Koolhaas
WSN Neighborhood Connectors*

Hope Church in the Community

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

Judy Bultman, Community Ministry Member

This month the Community Ministry would like to tell you about the Holland Free Health Clinic. This ministry facilitates access to health care for those in need in the Holland-Zeeland community. There is an on-sight dental clinic that provides teeth cleanings, restorations



and extractions. The health clinic also provides eye exams and eyeglasses, help with medication supplies, and spiritual and counseling services. Hope Church contributes financially to this program every year.

How you can help this ministry:

- They operate with volunteer staff. The web site hfhclinic.org has a list of volunteer needs.
- Through your prayers for this

ministry and all those involved.

- This Christmas we will also be collecting items on their wish list. So watch for more details about that in the coming weeks.

For donations to this program or for more information, contact The Holland Free Health Clinic at 616-392-3610 or hfhclinic.org.

Disability Awareness

Donita Robards, RN, Parish Nurse



We encounter people with disabilities throughout our lives: in our jobs, churches, schools and in passing on the street. You may have a loved one who has a disability. People with disabilities are everywhere in our community. We co-exist with them, but do we understand their needs, enter into friendships or work relationships with them? Or are we afraid to deal with something we don't understand?

Truthfully, we are more the same than we are different. We are all created in God's image (Genesis 1:26). We have the same needs for food, water, clothing shelter, and intimacy. We all need to have a sense of purpose. We all need to feel that we belong. A church community is a great place for everyone to come together, learn from each other and grow in God's family.

We are one body and we need each and every member to remain healthy and vibrant (1 Corinthians 12:12).

A few years ago I started a job working with people who had mental illness. They lived in residential programs. Most of the people I worked with were diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder. I knew very little about this illness; most of my experience was working with dementia or depression, so I felt like I was in a little over my head. Some of them intimidated me. I did not know how to respond to some of the delusional thoughts or hallucinations that the residents had. These residents would come to my office and talk to me about their health issues. Gradually, I learned that they had a lot of the same concerns I had. They were concerned about their health, medication, relationships, finances and freedom. As I got to know them, I learned how to communicate better. I wasn't intimidated by their differences. In fact, I came to enjoy and appreciate them for who they were; people like me.

advancement, of Elim Christian Services gives us five stages towards disability awareness: ignorance, pity, care, friendship, and co-laborers. We live in an information society, so we can seldom claim ignorance, although I confess that in certain situations I have been ignorant as in my experience working with people with severe mental illness. There are so many types of disabilities, no one will ever be above ignorance in all situations. Becoming friends and co-laborers requires persistence. It takes energy to make friendships and maintain them with anyone. Accepting each other's weaknesses and limitations makes co-laboring together even harder. We will never be perfect, but we can reach towards the goal of friendship and co-laboring together by reaching out to each other, and God through perseverance in prayer.

**Some of the content was taken from the Inclusion Handbook edited by Terry A DeYoung and Mark Stephenson*

Dan Vander Plaats, director of

9:30 a.m. Sunday Advent Worship

As part of our mission to “experiment courageously...to seek creativity and excellence in worship,” Hope Church is suspending both Early Worship and Adult Ed. during the weeks of Advent to create space for an alternative worship service. As we plan together, we are discovering that this service will unfold in three movements, one of which will be communion each week. Please consider coming to this service during the season of Advent - we are eager to share this with you beginning on **Sunday, November 30 at 9:30 a.m. in Commons I.**

and finally...

In our weekly Monday morning staff meeting, a different member of the staff leads us all in devotions as we begin the week together. (By the way, just after staff meeting we gather in the hallway in front of the office for coffee time from 10am-10:30am. We welcome anyone to join us so if ever you are in the area stop by!) This past week, Barbara Joldersma shared an excerpt from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book *Life Together* as she led us in devotions. In the excerpt, Bonhoeffer was speaking to fellow clergy but what he talked about is relevant to any of us. He was calling on us to cultivate spaciousness in our lives for the sake of being helpful to one another in the small, concrete, daily stuff of life. He was harshly criticizing those fellow clergy who think of themselves as doing such important work that they do not have time to lend a helping hand when they come across a person in need.

I've been pondering this all week and finding a deep resonance in my soul around this exhortation. Here's a few things I am noticing as I think about the times I have (and haven't) made myself available to this kind of helpfulness toward others. When I do, I am delighted by the feeling of appreciation that is exchanged. I feel connected to the person I am helping. That connection is as important to me as it is to the person I am helping. I also notice that I feel more open to receiving help too. I get out of the mode of thinking that everything is all up to me and I find myself welcoming the helping hand extended out in my direction. The simple act of slowing down, to step out of my agenda for the moment to step into another person's sphere, is also a deep blessing to my soul. Conversations happen that otherwise might

not occur. All of this strengthens the sacred bonds of shared life.

I ran across a quote by Joan Chittister that brought clarity to my meandering thoughts. She was actually talking about the blessing of shared meals together but I found her words descriptive of these moments of offering help and receiving help from one another in the course of daily life:

“It's at a meal where all of life comes together: talk, time, beauty, rest, and our awareness of our fascination with people and our need for one another.”¹

Fascination with people and an awareness of our need for one another: that's how I would describe the blessing of helpfulness. Not a bad spin on what might otherwise sound like a pious exhortation to add to the long list of other things we “should” be doing in life! It is also a pretty wonderful way to frame what we are looking to cultivate when we come toward our Thanksgiving Tables as well.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Jill

1. Joan Chittister, *Listen with the Heart: Sacred Moments in Everyday Life* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2003), 94.

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Hope Church News

November 2014



**Daylight savings ends at 2:00
a.m. on Sunday, November 2.
Remember to turn your clocks
back an hour!**