



# HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 57, No. 11

December 2014

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### Inserts:

- *December Calendar*
- *Lectionary*
- *Restorative Circles Facilitator List*

**The deadline for the January newsletter is Sunday, December 14.**

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

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## Advent 2014

### First Sunday of Advent November 30

<b>9:30 am</b>	Advent Alternative Worship
<b>11:00 am</b>	Worship
<b>4:15 pm</b>	Jubilate Rehearsal
<b>5:00 pm</b>	Advent Activities
	• <i>Children: Crafts</i>
	• <i>Youth: Cookie Baking</i>
	• <i>Adults &amp; Youth: Card Making</i>
<b>5:30 pm</b>	Advent Evensong Service
<b>6:00 pm</b>	Soup Supper & Lighting of Advent Candles

### Second Sunday of Advent December 7

<b>9:30 am</b>	Advent Alternative Worship
<b>11:00 am</b>	Worship
<b>12:15 pm</b>	St. Nicholas Brunch
<b>1:00 pm</b>	Jubilate Rehearsal

### Third Sunday of Advent December 14

<b>9:30 am</b>	Advent Alternative Worship
<b>11:00 am</b>	Worship
<b>4:00 pm</b>	Childcare available for pageant participants
<b>4:00 pm</b>	Jubilate Rehearsal
<b>4:15 pm</b>	Nativity Rehearsal: <i>for speaking parts only</i>
<b>4:15 pm</b>	Advent Organ Recital
<b>4:45 pm</b>	Pageant Participants Arrival
<b>5:00 pm</b>	Nativity Pageant

*More information regarding Advent services and activities can be found in the 2014 Advent Brochure which is available on the Hope Church website and in the Gathering Area.*

### Fourth Sunday of Advent December 21

<b>9:30 am</b>	Advent Alternative Worship
<b>11:00 am</b>	Worship
<b>12:15 pm</b>	Pizza Sunday
<b>12:30 pm</b>	Jubilate Rehearsal
<b>1:00 pm</b>	Congregational Caroling



### Christmas Eve Wednesday, December 24

<b>5:30 pm</b>	Family Worship Service
<b>11:00 pm</b>	Candlelight Communion

### Christmas Sunday Sunday, December 28

<b>11:00 am</b>	Christmas Worship Service
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*There will be no Early Worship, Church School, Adult Education, or CIW.*

## Christmas Offering to Support Addressing Ebola Outbreak



The Christmas offering will support organizations addressing the Ebola outbreak in Western Africa. Hope Church will support Doctors Without Borders, which is one of the most effective organizations in

working with local partners to offer both treatment and prevention - <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org>. The Christmas Offering will also support the We-Care Library in Monrovia, Liberia (supported by

the late Dr. David Klooster of Hope Church), which is addressing the education crisis brought on by Ebola through the delivery of home school kits to children - <http://we-carefoundation.org>.

## Advent Alternative Worship Service

Advent Alternative Worship at Hope Church will meet at 9:30 am on Sundays in Commons I, beginning the Sunday after Thanksgiving (Nov. 30), and will have three movements for each service: a journey inward, a journey outward, and the Lord's Supper. The journey inward will invite us to center our hearts and our lives, to step away from the lies and distortions that our culture throws at

us in this season, and to deepen our hope for Christ's presence and action in the world. The journey outward will deepen our connectedness with each other, and will clarify and strengthen our participation in God's gracious action in the world. In the meal, we will be fed and strengthened for our journey. The worship will be participatory, contemplative, creative, playful, and joyful.



## Christmas Cards for our Members

Continuing an Advent tradition, decorated gift bags will be on the pegboards in the Gathering Area. They will be delivered by Hope Church carolers on December 21. Enrich your Advent season by sharing Christmas cards with these members:

- |                    |  |                   |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|
| • Ruth Athey       | • Winnie Hollenbach                      | • Abby Price      |
| • LeVada Bombe     | • Clarence and Eleanor Hopkins           | • Don Proechel    |
| • Peg Danhof       | • Loren and Elsie Howard                 | • Mary Martin     |
| • Peggy Fitzgerald | • Maxine Johnson (Janice Chase's mother) | • Leola Ralph     |
| • Ruth Green       |  | • Alma Thomas     |
| • Bob Hanna        |  | • Virginia Timmer |
| • Eddie Haworth    |  | • Lila Vohlken    |
| • Betty Hildore    |  | • Helena Winter   |

## Washington School Neighbors Update

*Andrew Spidahl & Janelle Lopez-Koolhaas, Neighborhood Connectors*



### Washington School Neighbors

Do you ever get an idea stuck in your head? Or a vision for something as yet unreached, but you can't stop asking yourself how it could come to be? Do you ever wonder if God's Spirit is revealing something in those moments?

A couple of months ago, a member from Hope Church was sorting through files and came across something that struck her as a window into the vision of someone else. She had run across a paper written by the Rev. Del Vander Haar, a calling pastor from their church who has now passed on to glory. She marveled at how what he had envisioned some 20 years ago was now, with strikingly similar details, being carried out by Washington School Neighbors.

Here are a few highlights of the 1995 paper Rev. Vander Haar shared with his consistory:

"...Part of this dream is to establish a working network among all the urban and suburban churches, Christian agencies, institutions, the city and other professional organizations to decide how there can be renewal in the core city..."

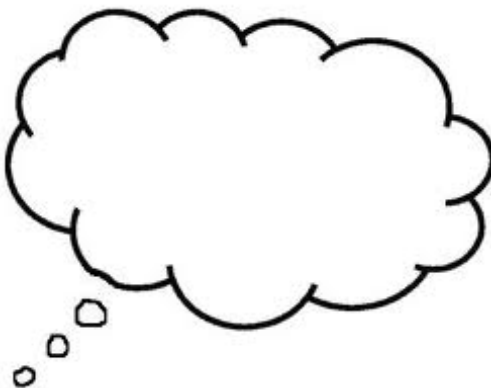
The paper goes on to describe the potential collaboration of many groups with neighbors. It outlines how a person in a coordinating role could organize efforts of contributing groups to foster relationships and mutual support local within one or a few block areas. This person would help to introduce neighbors to neighbors, and help residents discover resources and support when needed. The funding of this person's office might be shared by contributing churches, businesses and organizations. (Sound familiar?)

Towards the end of the short paper, the writer reflects, "Who can fully dream what needs might arise and how they might be lovingly and creatively met!" Indeed! I think this is where Asset Based Community Development (A.B.C.D.) comes in—it is one thing to imagine needs being met; certainly a noble and Biblical view--and another to look at what strengthening dynamics are already at work or lying untapped in our

community!

The creativity this thoughtful pastor wondered about is key to how we seek to build our neighborhood network, and it is playing out in all sorts of ways that we are just beginning to discover and engage. Already we too find ourselves with ideas that get stuck in our head. After all, should it surprise us that God is on the move, inviting us to join in and participate with open hearts in what God has already begun to create, shape and restore?

We are thankful for that faithful pastor and for all who have let this



vision get stuck in their heads, and thus, share their gifts in Washington School Neighborhood.

## Hope Church Welcomes New Members

These new members were welcomed into the fellowship of Hope Church on November 16 during the 11 a.m. worship service. Please take the time to welcome these individuals into the family of Hope Church.

### Adam Whitman



Adam Whitman joins by transfer from Samuel Lutheran Church, Muskegon. Adam recently moved with his family to Holland from St. Louis and works for Erickson's Crane and Rigging out of North Muskegon. He is married to Hope Church member Dana Huisman-Whitman. He is sponsored by Michael & Sarah Kolk.

### Joe & Megan Arevalo



Joe Arevalo joins by profession of faith. Megan Arevalo joins by transfer from Hillside Community Church, Grand Rapids. Joe and Megan moved to Holland this summer. Megan is the church administrator at Hope Church, and Joe is an appraiser for the City of Holland. They are sponsored by Andrew & Kallie Spidahl.

## Hope Church Members Invited to Live 'Premiere' of PBS Roundtable

*Milt Nieuwsma, Adult Education Taskforce Member*

Hope Church members are invited to the world premiere of "Inventing America," the pilot episode for a proposed PBS prime time roundtable series that will be filmed at Hope College's DeWitt Theatre at 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, December 4 and 5.

Created by Hope Church member Milt Nieuwsma, the program tells the story of the American republic in "live" interviews with the Founding Fathers played by professional actors. The first episode features Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Benjamin

Franklin discussing the Declaration of Independence. It also may, just may(!) star Marlin VanderWilt, another Hope Church member, as Dr. Franklin.

Why 'just may'? "Marlin agreed to understudy the part," Milt said. "If it works out, we may launch him on a whole new career on stage and screen. If not, he'll still have Sinterclaus to fall back on."

Scheduled for the three main parts are Colonial Williamsburg's Bill Barker as Jefferson, Samuel Goodyear

as John Adams, and John Hamant as Benjamin Franklin. The moderator will be Marc Baer, professor of history and chair of Hope's history department. The director is John Tammi, professor emeritus of theatre and the artistic founder of the Hope Summer Repertory Theatre.

Admission to the two Hope performances is free but reservations are recommended. To reserve call the college ticket office, 395-7890.



## Hope Church in the Community

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

Kath Brownson, Community Ministry Member

Have you heard of “Shakespeare Behind Bars”? What does this name bring to mind for you? Well, the name exactly describes what Curt Tofteland has spent the last 20 years of his life doing: creating and running a program that “serves incarcerated adults and youth using exclusively the works of William Shakespeare.” (See [www.shakespearebehindbars.org](http://www.shakespearebehindbars.org).) The program began and continues in Kentucky, and Curt is also working in Michigan in two prisons with 250 men at least once a week, with eight year-round SBB programs.

I asked Curt why he wanted to create this program. He said, “I created Shakespeare Behind Bars in 1995 to extend my life-long journey into houses of correction. I am an Arts Practitioner whose life-long work with ‘outsider’ populations often labeled as ‘the other’ has proven both therapeutic and healing for participants. Our recidivism rate in Kentucky over the 20-year life of the SBB program is 5.3% [compared to the State of Kentucky’s average, 29.5%, and the national average, 60%].”

Curt believes that Shakespeare’s plays

are the perfect vehicle to help inmates:

- relate the universal human themes contained in Shakespeare’s works to themselves, including their past experiences and choices, their present situation, and their future possibility
- develop a lifelong passion for learning
- develop literacy skills
- develop decision making, problem solving, and creative thinking skills
- develop empathy, compassion, and trust
- nurture a desire to help others
- increase self-esteem and develop a positive self-image
- take responsibility for the crime/s committed
- become a responsible member of a group, community, and family
- learn tolerance and peaceful resolution of conflict

Think about it. Giving inmates the opportunity to work together for many weeks; memorizing lines; coming to understand and identify with the hidden motives and struggles of their character; working through disagreements; and then to perform

the play in full costume for fellow inmates, families, and friends, must bring joy, pride, and a new understanding of what it means to be part of a meaningful, beautiful endeavor with others.

If you haven’t seen it already, please take the time to watch the film Shakespeare Behind Bars, the award-winning documentary about Curt’s work that received its world premiere at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. The DVD is available at Hope Church. You will watch these men (some convicted of serious crimes) discover important things about themselves through coming to understand and identify with their Shakespearean character. You will never forget it, and you will finish the film with deep love and hope for the men portrayed there. And we love you, Curt, for bringing hope to so many. Hope Church is honored to help support your work. Thank you.

For anyone interested in visiting the Shakespeare Behind Bars program, please contact Curt Tofteland.



*“To these actors, Shakespeare is about telling the truth from their own lives and finding the freedom they need in their souls to be at peace . . . It made me reflect on my own life, and how I need to grow as a person.” -Audience member*

# 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 Christian Education Ministry

Megan Marthens, Christian Education Ministry Co-Chair

*The children of Hope Church age 3 through the fifth graders participate in a wonderful worship experience each Sunday. They are led by Children in Worship storytellers. Some of these storytellers have been involved for over twenty years and some are just beginning but all are enriched by the experience. Megan Marthens shares her thoughts on the joys of sharing her time and talents with the children:*

"Be still and know that God is here"... The precious three and four year old children of Hope Church are learning to sing and sign beautiful songs such as this one during our weekly worship time together. Our Pre

Kindergarten Worship Center is alive and flourishing as we now move into the Advent Season. Story telling this fall has included Table of the Good Shepherd, the Story of Creation, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, as well as many others. The children are also learning the Order of Worship and the many ways we can give our praise and offerings to God. The financial offerings we share each week are going to support a school in Pakistan. As a

new storyteller this year, I feel blessed and honored to share such formative moments with some of our youngest members. Allison Davelaar and I are grateful for the time we spend with the children each week.



*The next Ministry Highlight will feature the Worship, Prayer and Spirituality Ministry.*

## Kids Hope USA

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



Our Kids Hope program year is now entering its third month and we are enjoying the benefits of growing relationships between our mentors and their Kids Hope students. We are delighted to see these relationships developing, because without a strong relationship it's very difficult to affect the social and academic growth we all want for our students. Our seven

new mentors report a good beginning and look forward to their continuing relationships. Here is a quote from one of our new mentors:

*Today as I was taking Zachariah back to class, he asked, "Do you come here for other children too?" I told him, "Nope - just for you - - you're the only one." "Every week?" "Yep, every Friday." "Even when I go to 2nd grade?" "You bet."*

*Amazing - - after just two weeks. Glad that you clued us in about their desire to be the only one. Walking out, another child gave me a spontaneous hug as well - - what a great ministry.*

We are still looking for mentors for

the following children:

- A second grade boy who needs help with homework and learning to stay focused. His family situation is broken.
- A third grade boy who is shy, has a hard time understanding directions, but is a hard worker.
- A fifth grade boy who is smart, honest, with a kind heart, who needs help with anger issues and behavior management.

If you would you like to join our group of dedicated volunteers, please contact Anne Duinkerken or Barbara Joldersma.



## Youth Ministry

*Beth Jarvis, Youth Ministry Director*

The Holiday season might still be a couple weeks away, but our youth groups have already begun getting into the spirit of things. Continuing on with the yearly apple pie tradition, November 7 and 8 was filled with flour, cinnamon, apples and busy hands, as Fish Club assembled over 250 pies to raise money for such activities as the Appalachian Trail trip and our January Cran Hill retreat. There are plenty extra, so feel free to buy a couple of frozen pies to bring to give as gifts or as your contribution to Christmas dinner. Rest assured that this year our Middle Schoolers are confident as to the difference between sugar and salt and have kept the proper amounts in check, while making the pies.

High Hopes has also begun shifting their hearts and focus onto Advent. On November 9, Rachelle Oppenhuizen led us not only in a guided meditative study, but also an art activity. The results of this project will be used as bulletin covers for the Advent season. Keep your eyes

peeled to see what we came up with!

In the upcoming weeks, both groups will be focused on ways to participate and give during Advent. Fish Club had to cancel their yearly tradition of raking leaves for a few congregants due to snow, but will plan a new service project for the new year. On November 23, High Hopes will be assembling meals for the Community Kitchen. Both groups also look forward to celebrating

the season with fun activities, like a movie night and progressive dinner for High Hopes and a Christmas party for Fish Club. Amidst all of the activities, celebrating, and crafts, we also continue connecting with each other and with God through regular prayer, devotions, and our times of sharing. We look forward to all of the things God continues to teach us in our midst!



## Children's Ministry-Advent for Our Youngest Members

*Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director*

### **Christmas Ornaments for the Children**

Each year the younger children (pre-school through elementary ages) are encouraged to take an ornament home with them as a gift from Hope Church. The ornaments will be available from the tree in the Gathering Area beginning December 14. Enjoy them on your tree.

### **Children in Worship**

Ask any worshipper from the Children in Worship centers and

they will tell you that it is the beginning of the church year. We have just completed Growing Time and are now entering a time of preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth. There is excitement in the worship center as we begin this Advent season. The children will hear stories of the prophets and the angels telling of the coming of the Lord, lighting the Advent candles, and singing songs of waiting.

**Children in Worship will meet each Sunday in Advent. All the children**

**will remain in the sanctuary on December 28 for the family service. The 4th and 5th graders will take part in the Epiphany Service on January 4.**

### **Children's Offering**

During the Advent season, the children's offering will be used to help with the Tree of Light gift giving. Each worship center will choose a gift request from the tree and share our blessing by fulfilling that request.

## Events and Announcements

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

### Winter Cancellations

Be sure to check the Hope Church website blog and Facebook for any cancellations due to weather!

**Circle 1** will meet on **Wednesday, December 3, 9:30 AM** at the home of Lois Boersma.

**Circle 2** will meet on **Wednesday, December 3, 9:30 AM** at Hope Church in Commons II.

**Circle 4** will hold their Christmas Gathering on **Wednesday, December 10 at 6:30 PM** in Kathy Mulder Sheridan's home.

### Saint Nicholas Brunch

Please join us after worship on **Sunday, December 7** to celebrate a Saint Nicholas Brunch. Children will meet Saint Nicholas during worship and be able to visit with him during the brunch. We will enjoy scrambled eggs, pig-in-a-blankets, and oranges. Please have children bring an extra shoe to leave for Saint Nicholas to fill with a treat. **Please sign up in the gathering area by Sunday, November 30.**

### Coffee Time at Freedom Village

The next Coffee Time will be at Freedom Village on Tuesday, **December 9 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. All are welcome!

### Advent Organ Recital

Rhonda Edgington will be playing her annual Advent organ recital this year on **Sunday, December 14 at 4:15pm.** As in previous years, this will be a collection of Advent themed hymns for congregational singing, as well as pieces based on those hymns, and centered around themes of Advent and Christmas. This year, Rhonda will be performing an exciting work of the French early 20th century by Marcel Dupre, *The World Awaiting the Savior*, from his Passion Symphony, whose driving rhythms and complex chords (almost jazzy in sound) make this piece a favorite of Rhonda's. She will also be playing a work by Hugo Distler, a German writing during WWII era, whose music is influenced by the Baroque, as well as jazz and popular music. And there will also be music by Bach! Hope to see you then.

### Hope Church Readers

Hope Church Readers will meet on **Wednesday, December 17, at 1 PM** in the Commons. An unusual program is planned with Judy VanderWilt leading a discussion about the well known author of children's books, Tomie de Paula. A rare treat is promised, and further information about the books being discussed will be sent out to members via email. Visitors are welcome.

### 2015 Offering Envelopes

Envelopes for 2015 offerings will be available for pick-up in the Gathering Area in late December. They are displayed alphabetically and we request that you pick up envelopes for your entire family. If you are unable to be in worship and need your envelopes mailed, please call the church office. Special envelopes

for the initial offering and for contributions to the Deacons Fund are enclosed, as well as envelopes for special holiday offerings. You are encouraged to use your envelopes as this saves time when the offering is counted and recorded.

### December Birthdays

- |    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 20 | Myra Berry<br>Care Group: 1    |
| 29 | Helen DeWeerd<br>Care Group: 4 |

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

### Financial Update as of 11/19/14:

YTD income - \$549,380

YTD budgeted income - \$575,274

YTD Expenses - \$611,921

YTD budgeted expenses - \$616,489

### Brim Brunch

Brim Bunch will gather on **December 18 at 6:00 pm** for a Christmas dinner and program. The menu for the dinner is pork roast, broccoli-cheese-brown rice casserole, cranberries, potatoes and Christmas cake. The dinner will be served and costs \$8.00 a piece. A vocal quartet, Dave and Barb Schmitt and Laurie Beyer Braaksma and Randall Braaksma, will present the program entitled 'Sounds of the Season' following the meal. They will offer a collection of readings (both humorous and serious) and sing carols. The evening would not be complete if there were not an opportunity for everyone to join a sing-along of carols. The bus will run from Freedom Village, Warm Friend and Appledorn. A caller will phone you for your reservation. Enjoy the Christmas spirit at Brim Bunch, December 18th.

### Pizza Sunday

The next Pizza Sunday is scheduled for **December 21**, which is **NOT**

the last Sunday of the month! Pizza Sunday hosts and salad providers are needed for 2015; please sign up on the Fellowship bulletin board in the Gathering Area.

### Restorative Circles Training

Restorative Circles Facilitator Training is being offered **February 6-7 from 9am-4pm**. The training will give a comprehensive overview of Restorative Circles and will provide more detailed information on each phase of a Restorative Circle. There will be opportunity to practice all three rounds of dialogue used in a Circle. Register online at [HollandRestorativeCircles.org](http://HollandRestorativeCircles.org) or call the Hope Church office at (616) 392-7947. Brochures with more information are available in the gathering area.

**The Winds of Change**, an essay by James K. Haveman, Director of the Michigan Department of Community Health, is available at the Welcome Center and also accessible on the Hope Church website ([HopeChurchRCA.org](http://HopeChurchRCA.org)). Mr. Haveman, a guest speaker during the Adult Education Disability Awareness Series, wrote the article on September 2, 2014, a few days after resigning his position as

Director, due to a minor stroke.

### At Home with the Word 2014-2015

An electronic version of the daily Bible readings for the coming year (Advent 2014-Advent 2015) can be found on the Hope Church website. Printed copies are available in the church office.

### College and 20/30 Adult Ministry

At **1 pm** on the Saturday following Thanksgiving, **November 29**, we are hosting a meal and prayer time at Hope Church for college aged and 20/30 adults who would like to celebrate together and connect. Contact Andrew Spidahl with questions: [aspidahl@hopechurchrca.org](mailto:aspidahl@hopechurchrca.org).

We are also continuing our Thursday evening meal and prayer at **7:00 PM** for college aged and 20/30 adults. We alternate between Grace Episcopal and Hope Church as venues. Know that you are welcome. Feel free to pass this along to any who might appreciate this type of community. We will meet on **December 4, 11, and 18**. There will be a break for Christmas, and we will not meet again until **January 8**. Again, contact Andrew Spidahl for details and the most up to date information.

## Thank Yous

*Hope Church Staff and Congregation,*

*There are no words big enough to express our family's thanks to each of you for your care and comfort we received on the sudden death of our father, brother, and son, Jon Brockmeier. The support at the memorial service has been unforgettable and the warm continuous support a true blessing.*

*~Helen Brockmeier, Ken Taylor, Cliff and Mary Beth Lampe, Thomas, Tabitha, Theodore, and Tristan Brockmeier*

*Thank you to all my Hope Church family for the wonderful support after I broke my arm. The meals, the visits, the flowers, the cards and the prayers were so appreciated. Your love and concern carried me through a difficult time. It was the church at its best. Thank you.*

*~Loretta Smith*

## Some Thoughts about Feelings

Donita Robards, RN, Parish Nurse



Our culture places a lot of emphasis on feelings. We ask our neighbors “How are you?” or “How are you feeling?” We talk about how we feel in passing conversation. “I’m so tired. I don’t feel like going to work today.” We speak these words over and over like a broken record (for those of you who remember records). If you are suffering from depression, you won’t feel like doing anything. That’s the nature of the disease. It takes a lot of energy to navigate through daily life.

The holidays can trigger depressive episodes in people who are already susceptible, whether they have suffered from bouts of depression in the past, or circumstances render them vulnerable. How can a church community help those who are dealing with depression? What can a person who has depression do for themselves?

A church can look back and see who has suffered a loss in the past year. Losses are usually easy to spot. Death, divorce, loss of job, poor health are frequent culprits. As a church, we should respond to these

people in love. Visits, cards and meals can help. Inviting someone to share a meal with you or an evening out is even better. Knowing that someone cares enough to walk through the dark valleys can be enough to give a person hope.

The person who has depression also has a responsibility towards their own well-being. Our fast food, overly productive society has bought into the idea of quick fixes. Go to the doctor, get a pill, and feel better. Depression doesn’t always work that way. It is important to see your doctor. Medication may be a part of the treatment plan, but it shouldn’t be the only part of the plan.

Getting well entails a little work on the part of the person who is ill. For depression, that means getting up in the morning when you don’t want to, eating a little food when you don’t have a very good appetite, and going to work when you would just as soon stay home. I have often heard people say that they will get around to these things once they feel better. The truth is they will not

feel better until they do these things. If you have depression you cannot trust your thoughts either. It is common to ruminate over all the things that have gone wrong. No wonder that people who have depression feel so bad! Knowing that thoughts can control how we feel, can empower us to make the choice to change what we think about. And we do have a choice. The bible tells to think on whatever is excellent or praiseworthy (Phil 4: 8).

While the tools to manage depression are simple, the disease is not. It takes a lot of perseverance and a good support team to help you through it. These are some basic ideas to get started. If you have depression, please see your doctor so you can get the assistance you need.

## *and finally...what is alternative worship?*

One person at our meeting spoke up. "If 'alternative' means different from other worship services in the area, then our eleven o'clock service already is alternative!" People murmured their assent. We were picking our way through the prickier bushes of defining our task--to imagine a new alternative worship service at Hope Church--and finding our attention drawn by this question: What is Alternative Worship?

Is it cool? New? Hip? Vintage? Ancient? Loud? Soft? Does it have drums? A screen? Someone with tattoos? Candles? Couches? Coffee? Whatever it is, we didn't want it to be imported, foreign, copied... it had to be something generated from the center of the spirit of this congregation of believers. And so we found ourselves at the heart of our mission statement as Hope Church, RCA.

Our mission statement has some beautiful language and goals toward growing in faith, being a welcoming and open community, and leading in service, justice, and acts of compassion--things one would hope to find similarly in many Christian congregations. But the one purpose that stands out is that we are "called by God...to Pioneer." By the Holy Spirit, we are "willing to experiment courageously and to press ahead in new directions...to seek creativity and excellence in worship..." This is fairly unique to our identity--we are called to be pioneers.

One way we do that is through the good work of Brian Carder, introducing us to new songs and worship styles. Another way is through the various weekly leadership at Early Worship that has us engaging the scriptures in a variety of ways. We have our healing services, our seasonal series, and our special days. All of these are good, creative, excellent. And as pioneers we press on asking, "What more can we do to inhabit this calling?" I like the way Cindi Veldheer DeYoung, in last month's newsletter, pointed us to the Psalmist's exhortation, "Sing a new song to the Lord!" Not because the old is no longer good, but because our God is not static, nor are we, and we find renewed expressions in our spirits that seek a voice.

Jesus had a conversation with a Samaritan woman about

how and where to worship God. She thought on the mountain, the Jews thought at the temple. Jesus said, "In spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). What Alternative Worship is to us will take its shape not primarily from its form (candles or couches) but from our honest efforts to find fresh expression of our faith as we are led by a pioneering Holy Spirit.

So, what is Alternative Worship at Hope? Let's find out. It might be as inspiring as a first glimpse of the white crested Rockies. It might be as tedious as Nebraska's endless sand hills. But in the end, it is this congregation's calling.


Blessings,  
Andrew Spidahl

p.s. Yes, we do have a plan - and we are excited about it.  
Nov. 30 at 9:30 a.m.

*"Sing unto the Lord a new song"*  
- Psalm 96





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# Hope Church News

December 2014



## Consistory Corner

At the Consistory Meeting of November 10, 2014 the following Motions were passed:

- To adopt the name A Living Hope to designate the Hope Church capital campaign and renovation project.
- To give permission to Executive Committee to sign contracts for the first phase of the renovation project so it will proceed in a timely manner.
- To designate the following ministries as Ministry Partners who will share the 5% Benevolence portion of A Living Hope project: 4th/New Community, Maple Ave Ministries, Greenpoint (Brooklyn) RCA, and Haiti Foundation. Decisions about how to divide up the allocation of those funds will be made at a future meeting once information from each ministry has been received.

Also noted at the meeting was the plan for information sharing as A Living Hope continues. There will be a link to a blog on our website ([hopechurchrca.org](http://hopechurchrca.org)) with regular updates. Meetings will be scheduled with the architects, the Construction Managers Elzinga & Volkers, and other significant players as the design work continues. The congregation will be made aware of these planning meetings and will be invited to attend if they so desire. Lois Maassen, Project Team Leader, will make monthly reports to Consistory.