



# HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 58, No. 2

February 2015

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## Inserts:

- February Calendar
- Lectionary
- Restorative Circles Facilitator List

**The deadline for the March newsletter is Tuesday, February 17.**

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



## The Season of Lent at Hope Church

### Wednesday Evening Series

*Nursery care will be provided.*

Hope Church will be offering four Wednesday evening worship services during the season of Lent, starting with the Ash Wednesday service on February 18. The following three services will incorporate spiritual songs, testimony, silence, and communion. Our focus will be directed by the gospel texts as we let the more difficult aspects of love turn us toward God—trial, rebuke, and anger.

#### February 18

##### Ash Wednesday

6:00 p.m. Supper

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.

#### February 25

7:00 p.m. Worship Service

Love and Trial

Mark 1:9-15

#### March 11

7:00 p.m. Worship Service

Love and Anger

John 2:13-22

#### March 4

7:00 p.m. Worship Service

Love and Rebuke

Mark 8:31-38

*For more information on the Season of Lent, see the brochure that will be available in the Gathering Area starting February 8.*

## Annual Congregation Meeting Highlights

From January 18, 2015

- Looking back at 2014, highlights, concerns, and ideas were shared, using the Discerning Our Future themes as a guide for those reflections.
- Pastor Jill and Pastor Gordon shared a report called "A Year in the Life of Hope Church." Copies are available in the office and at the welcome desk.
- The congregation approved the 2015 Operating Budget.
- Pastoral Resident Andrew Spidahl gave an update on his ministry with Young Adults, now called the 20/30 Ministry, Alternative Worship, and Neighborhood Connections.
- Lois Maassen gave an update on the Living Hope Renovations Project and Capital Campaign (*see page 7 for more information on this project.*)

## ADULT EDUCATION

Sundays, 9:40–10:40 a.m. in Commons I

### Season of Reconciliation

#### **February 1 - *Among the Tulips***

Angel and Janelle Lopez will discuss their experiences as a young multi-ethnic couple in Holland MI and participate in facilitated discussion about how to create a welcoming environment.

#### **February 8 - *Summary***

The members of the Reconciliation Ministry will facilitate a summation of the season of reconciliation and the steps that we can take collectively and individually to effect change.



## Invitation to “Body and Soul: We Belong” Adult Education Classes

Is there any basis in our Reformed Church tradition for the full inclusion of LGBTQ people in the church? Hope Church will engage in a guided conversation as we explore major themes of Reformed tradition and whether they support such inclusion.

The Adult Education Ministry of Hope Church is pleased to offer ***Room for All’s “Body and Soul: We Belong, Welcoming and Affirming in the Reformed Tradition.”*** The free class is open to all and will meet on six Sundays.

Each class will begin with a provocative 10-minute video, professionally created specifically for eliciting conversations. Each video begins with a modern-day parable and then provides brief remarks from a variety of people within the Reformed Church in America in response to the theme of the parable. Teachers who have a variety of perspectives on Reformed theology and practice will lead the discussions.

#### **February 15 - *BELONGING***

Jane Dickie, Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Women’s Studies, Hope College

#### **March 8 - *MISSION***

Paul Smith, former Director of Beardslee Library, Western Theological Seminary

#### **February 22 - *BAPTISM***

Lynn Japinga, Professor of Religion, Hope College

#### **March 15 - *SCRIPTURE***

Dawn Boelkins, Assistant Professor of Biblical Languages, Western Theological Seminary

#### **March 1 - *FAITH & FREEDOM***

Jeff Japinga, Associate Dean, McCormick Theological Seminary

#### **March 29 - *SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD***

Don Luidens, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Hope College

Please join us for engaged conversation. Each class meets 9:40–10:40 AM in Commons I.

## Save the Date - Plan to Participate - Discerning Holy Relationships

The board of elders is in a discernment process regarding what Hope Church's position will be on same-gender marriage should they become legal in Michigan. As part of their discernment, they have asked a small team to design several opportunities for congregation wide conversations. Please note these 2 series coming up in early 2015 and plan to take part.

### Adult Education Series

*Body and Soul: We Belong*

*Welcoming and Affirming in the Reformed Tradition*

February 15, 22, March 1, 8, 15, and 29

Sundays, 9:40 AM-10:40 AM

(See page 2 for more information)

### Wednesday Evening Series

Discerning Holy Relationships

April 22, 29 and May 13, 20

Wednesday Evenings, 6:45 -8:30 PM

Dessert will be provided

## Rhonda's Hope Church Concert, and Other Musical Goings-On

*Rhonda Edgington, Associate Director of Music and Organist*

I have a lot of local music-making planned for the winter and spring, and wanted to keep you all updated, in case you are interested in hearing me play outside the context of worship at Hope Church.

March will be a busy month for me. I have been excitedly planning my annual spring Hope Church concert, for Sunday afternoon, March 22 at 3pm. This will be an unusual concert, in that I will be playing exclusively music for organ and other instruments, and I've included some combinations one doesn't hear all the time, as well as more traditional combinations. Amanda Dykhous (concertmistress of the Holland Symphony) will be playing violin, Sarah Southard (professor at Hope College) will be playing oboe/english horn, Julie Sooy (professor at Hope College, and director of the West MI Flute Orchestra) will be playing flute, Brendan Bohnhorst (Holland Symphony) will be playing tuba, and Matt Beck (Calvin College and West Michigan Symphony) will be playing marimba. In case you were wondering, we will NOT all be playing one piece together! There will be pieces from various countries and eras for organ and single instruments.

The part I'm most excited about is the world premiere of a piece written by my friend and church music colleague at Grace Episcopal, Steve Jenkins. It's a piece for marimba and organ, which was composed over 10 years ago for a commission, but then for various reasons never performed. Steve's own unique musical voice is obvious in the music, with influences from jazz, modern composers like Steve Reich, as well as liturgical church music and organ literature throughout the centuries. I'm very excited to perform it, and look forward to sharing it with you! And how often does one hear music for marimba and organ?

As well in March, I've been asked to be a part of the Grand Rapids Bach Festival. Players from the GR Symphony will be playing with a few organists at the Calvin College chapel, playing some wonderful music for organ and orchestra, on Monday, March 16 at 8pm.

On Sunday, March 15 at 3pm at First Reformed, the local community choir for which I accompany, the Holland Chorale, will be doing excerpts from one of our past concerts, as a free public concert.

And Sunday, April 19 at 3pm at First Reformed, I will be playing on the popular local series Free @ Three, with Holland French Horn player Greg Bassett, no stranger to Hope Church. This is the program that was snowed out last January (and this year, we didn't volunteer for a winter date!) Hope to see you at one of these local events!

My winter and spring will be mostly spent here in Holland, but I do have one trip planned. I will be flying to Chattanooga, TN to play at the Episcopal Cathedral there, on a wonderful organ built in a Baroque, northern European style. I will then head to Birmingham, AL, to give a lecture at Birmingham-Southern College, play a noontime recital at the Cathedral Church of the Advent, and see an old college friend who lives there with her family.

If you are ever interested in reading more about what I've done or am doing, I have a website, with pictures from my trips and concerts on a blog there, as well as info on upcoming recitals.

<http://rhonda.edgington.info>

## Washington School Neighbors Update

Andrew Spidahl & Janelle Lopez-Koolhaas, Neighborhood Connectors



Own your  
neighborhood.

Leave your porch lights ON!

#shinedowngraffiti



*"And the light shines in the darkness;  
and the darkness does not overcome  
it." (John 1:5)*

You may have seen, and certainly must have heard about the sharp rise in graffiti activity in the City of Holland in the last month or so. Someone or some group out there wants to make their mark and be heard. Their anonymous 'tagging' on every kind of building in our downtown has left

residents with a haunted, invaded feeling. Who did that? Why did they? For whom is it intended? Whose property will be next? Who is on the move? This disconcerted feeling lingers even after the scrawls are painted out, fingers have been wagged, and the police have been called.

Negative, destructive activities like graffiti grab our attention and get us talking. Thinking. What does this mean to us? And even while we too are perturbed about the graffiti, we want to speak up and point out that signs of the Kingdom of God are all around us too. So let's point them out and let them make us think! I think of the woman who gave away one of

her coats to someone who had none; about a man who received help to replace the roof of his porch and avoid a fine from the city; about a neighbor bringing over a meal and initiating a friendship; about the folks I've seen shoveling their neighbors' driveways, just to be nice. Shine a light on those things! Let the Light shine through you. Say thank you to those whose light you see. What else have you seen?

One a much more practical note, as a simple response to the recent vandalism, WSN is rallying neighbors to leave an [LED] porch light on and show our care for the spaces around our homes.

[WashingtonSchoolNeighbors.com](http://WashingtonSchoolNeighbors.com)

[Facebook.com/WashingtonSchoolNeighbors](https://Facebook.com/WashingtonSchoolNeighbors)

### Hope Church in the Community

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

Anne Saliers, Community Ministry Member

Playing an active role in revitalizing housing in our community, Jubilee Ministries Inc. is all about strengthening Holland's neighborhoods. Its work includes:

- Complete home renovations
- Owning and managing Midtown Center located at 95 West 15th Street
- Owning and overseeing the Renaissance Building at 501 West 17th Street in South Shore Village, home to several local businesses

Jubilee Ministries has renovated 25 houses which are now homeowner occupied. The houses they have rescued are ones that commercial developers aren't interested in and are too far gone for landlords. They're houses that have been empty for a long period of time

and are in serious disrepair. Jubilee Ministries, together with Taking Root Ministries, renovates these houses and sells them for homeowner occupied properties. One of the houses is now a lovely home to Jill Russell and Andrew Bunnell and family. The profit from the sale of these homes is then reinvested into another purchase and the work continues, strengthening Holland's neighborhoods.





## Kids Hope Update

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



January was an eventful month for us. Among other things, we held our annual Kids Hope Appreciation Dinner and Workshop which is a time when all of our volunteers are invited to gather at our church for a time of fellowship and sharing. We share our Kids Hope stories over dinner and then take the time to

provide tips which have been helpful in our mentoring or in our efforts to communicate within our team (prayer partner, Kids Hope child, mentor) so that others may benefit from both our successes and our struggles. This is always a time of encouragement and problem-solving for both long-time and relatively new mentors.

We also completed the first step in the process which enables many of our Vanderbilt Kids Hope students to spend a week at Camp Geneva. Thanks to many generous donors, Camp Geneva is able to provide large scholarships to Kids Hope campers who are entering grades 4-6 in the fall. We ask the parents of our Kids Hope students to provide \$50 towards the remaining camp costs if they are able to do so and our very supportive congregation provides the rest of

the necessary funds for overnight campers. Donations to our camp fund by members of the congregation also enable us to offer scholarships so that our Kids Hope children who are entering grades 2-3 can attend Day Camp.

Last year, we were able to send 7 children to Geneva Shores (overnight camp) and 3 children to Day Camp. We are so grateful that we can provide our Vanderbilt students with this chance to make new friends and grow in their spiritual commitment, sense of independence, social skills, and self-esteem. And we know we cannot do it without you. Thanks for being a part of our Hope Church Kids Hope Team and for your generous gifts, which make this opportunity to share God's love possible.

## Appreciation for Caring for Creation Leadership



It was July 2002 when Peter Boogaart agreed that the new Caring for Creation initiative could be "an area where he would have some energy to give." Little did he know that it was a twelve-year commitment! During that

time, Peter arranged innumerable educational sessions, informational exhibits, and outdoor outings and activities for the elucidation and engagement of Hope Church members and friends.

Approaching other life changes, Peter let us know of his desire to

retire from the chair of Caring for Creation. Community Ministry, which provides an organizational connection to this ministry, is developing plans for continued leadership; watch for an announcement soon.

In the meantime, when you cross paths with Peter, please join the Community Ministry in heartfelt thanks to him for his long service and the ways in which he's made our lives--both as individuals in our own homes and collectively--better.



# 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 Congregational Care Ministry

*Dave Boelkins, Congregational Care Ministry member*

Many groups at Hope Church provide care and support for persons in the Hope Church family, but the Congregational Care Ministry seeks to support all persons in a caring and loving community of faith in all events of life. The Ministry members along with the pastors, the church nurse and Consistory members are dedicated to address both the needs and joys of the Hope Church family.

The Ministry assigns all persons who attend Hope Church to one of twelve Care Groups. Each Group is served by a member of the Ministry and by an elder and a deacon from Consistory. If you do not know which group you are in, look behind your name in the Church Directory. Behind the front page of the Directory, the leadership team is identified for each Care Group.

Each Care Group finds its own way to stay in tune with members' lives and needs. Contact the pastors, group leaders or the church office when you seek ways to connect to the life of Hope Church or find yourself in need of care or support. The Ministry will arrange meals, transportation or other resources in times of need. Care groups also provide Prayer Shawls from the Knitting Ministry during times of extended illness as a way of sharing a sense of God's peace and healing.

To assist people living in retirement settings, the Ministry provides bus

transportation for each Sunday worship service and special events after the service. Recognizing the need for expanded transportation services, the Consistory has approved additional funding for this. Please let your Care Group leader or the church office know if there are events at church which you wish to attend but require transportation. To promote the engagement of persons in the life of the church, the ministry arranges for a time of sharing through coffee events three times a year at Freedom Village, Warm Friend and Resthaven locations.

A special effort is made to maintain relationships with people who are no longer able to participate in church life. Besides personal visits, opportunities are arranged for communion to be given in their homes by the elders. Flowers are distributed at Easter and Christmas as well as Christmas cards, cookies and caroling at Christmas time.

The Health Ministry, which is part of the Congregational Care Ministry but functions separately, provides a specific focus on faith and health through adult education programs, blood pressure clinics, medical equipment and flu shots.

Because the Ministry assigns two persons to each of the twelve groups, the Ministry is a large team and is always welcoming new members. While many people in

the congregation have contributed to the function of the Ministry, it is presently served by:

Group 1: Judy Mastenbrook and Jackie Heisler

Group 2: Jan Fike and Nancy Vande Water

Group 3: Bette Williams and Cary Russell

Group 4: Eloise Van Heest and Pat Tysee

Group 5: Fran Becker and Tom Mullens

Group 6: Nancy and Stan Rock and Dave Boelkins

Group 7: Char Laman

Group 8: Carla Beach and Phil Van Eyl

Group 9: Rose Mary Cantor and Steve Griffore

Group 10: Bob Bos and Vickie Rumpsa

Group 11: Loretta Smith and Barb Bouma

Group 12: Barb Israels and Michelle Johnson

Anyone interested in supporting this Ministry by becoming a member of the team or by assisting with meals or transportation is encouraged to contact any of the above persons.

*The next Ministry Highlight will feature the Stewardship & Finance Ministry.*

## Design Work for Living Hope Underway

Lois Maassen, Project Team Leader



Hope Church re-engaged with Elevate Studio in December, which led to January being spent in gathering more specific design requirements for the refinement and further development of the plans for the Living Hope renovation. During February, that design work will be underway, with the intention to share updated plans with the congregation in March.

In January, Consistory determined how to allocate donations among

the four projects we plan to support through the capital campaign. This portion of the campaign recognizes both that our facility enables us to support our community and that we share a mission with others beyond our walls. Greenpoint Reformed Church, will receive 30 percent of the benevolent portion; the Haiti Foundation Against Poverty will receive 25 percent for building a permanent home for orphans. The remaining 45 percent will be divided between New Community/ Fourth Reformed and Maple Avenue Ministries in Holland; both are engaged in neighborhood development and both have facility renovations or restorations.

During February, you'll see more communication from the Living Hope capital campaign. While donations and pledges have already been received, the campaign will

officially open on February 15. We'll assess our progress at the end of May, with the hope that Consistory can affirm or adjust the scope of the project.

In the meantime, updates are posted on the project website, which is at [LivingHopeRCA.Wordpress.com](http://LivingHopeRCA.Wordpress.com) or through the link on the Happenings page on the Hope Church website. Your ideas and comments are welcome, submitted through the website, by email, conversation, or through the church office.

## Connect with the Life of Hope Volunteer Blog

Communications Task Force

**LIFE OF HOPE**  
Expressing our faith in our congregation and community

**HOPE CHURCH**

Feeds: [Posts](#) [Comments](#)

**Room for All Conference Art Auction**  
December 17, 2013 by [agiffore](#)

Room for All is auctioning off a piece of art that was created at the National Conference in October. The colorful collaborative art response was created by conference participants and then brought together and painted by artist Joel Schoon-Tanis. To view the painting, [click here](#).

We'd like to pool funds to make a bid on behalf of Hope Church and bring the art piece to our church. Please email [office@hopechurchca.org](mailto:office@hopechurchca.org) and indicate how much you are willing to donate towards the bid by **Monday morning, December 23rd**.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [diversity](#), [donations](#), [inclusiveness](#), [reconciliation](#) | 1 Comment »

**Call for Original Poetry on Gratitude or Thanksgiving**  
November 12, 2013 by [agiffore](#)

We are looking to collect several pieces of original poetry on the theme of gratitude or thanksgiving to share during the annual Thanksgiving Eve worship service. If you are willing to submit a piece for inclusion in the service, please send it to the church office ([office@hopechurchca.org](mailto:office@hopechurchca.org)) by **Monday, Nov. 18**.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [meditations](#), [worship](#), [writing](#) | Leave a Comment »

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The New Year is a great time to sign up to receive email alerts for the Life of Hope Volunteer Blog. If you have not yet joined this growing rank of connected Hope Church members and friends, you can sign up today by going to

**[lifeofhopechurch.wordpress.com](http://lifeofhopechurch.wordpress.com)**

On the homepage, type your email address into the email subscription box on the right side of the page. You will receive an email each time

there is a new post so that you can stay connected to opportunities to volunteer both in the community and in the ministry at Hope Church.

And don't forget to *use* the blog to promote volunteer opportunities. Just contact the church office with the information you would like posted including the email contact for those interested in helping.



## Events and Announcements

**The Christmas offering** total for Doctors Without Borders and the We-Care Library in Monrovia, Liberia was \$8,436.25. The generous support of Hope Church is much appreciated!

**Circle 1** will meet on **Wednesday, February 4 at 9:30 AM** at Hope Church in Commons II.

### 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.

### Walk for Warmth: February 7

It is warm hearts, warm boots, warm homes time again! The annual Walk for Warmth is a way you can specifically help families in need in Ottawa County who have fallen behind in heating bills. Last year, Walk for Warmth was able to assist 400 households. Ottawa County is doing well in many ways but there still are many families whose resources make meeting basic needs and heating costs difficult. You can walk or support this year's Walk for Warmth which will happen Saturday, February 7. There will be a table in the Gathering Area on Sunday, January 25 to sign-up or donate to support Hope Church members

who will walk. Registration for Walk for Warmth begins at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 7 (no registration fee) at City on a Hill, 100 Pine Street, in Zeeland. There will be good, hot coffee ready. Come and join a brisk 2 mile, well-marked winter walk around downtown Zeeland. Please seek out Norma Killilea if you have questions and join Norma in this local, supportive activity!

### Coffee Time at Warm Friend

The next Coffee Time will be at the Warm Friend on Tuesday, **February 10 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!

### Colts Neck Reformed Church

Save the date! On **February 14-15** we have the opportunity to enjoy concert performances, as well as play host to Colts Neck Reformed Church's youth and bell choirs. Jubilation! will present a musical entitled *Rescue 101* and their five octave bell choir will perform a collection of sacred and secular pieces. There will be opportunities to host kids overnight, as well join in on a dinner potluck on the 14th. Dinner will be at 6 PM and the Musical will be at 7 PM. Please sign up to attend in the Gathering area, and mark whether you are planning to bring a main dish or a salad to the potluck. We also need around 15 households to house 2 youth each on Saturday night, February 14. Please sign up on the same sheet in the gathering area.

### Hope Church Readers

Hope Church Readers will be meeting on **Wednesday, February 18**, at 1:00 PM in the Commons. Discussion of the book, Tell the Wolves I'm Home by Carol Rifka Brunt will be led by Jackie Heisler. Guests and visitors are welcome.

### The "Big Sing" - a Hymn Festival to Celebrate Lift Up Your Hearts

A number of local musicians have been working together to plan a joint event this year, celebrating the new hymnal of the RCA and CRC - *Lift Up Your Hearts*, which Hope Church has purchased and will be using in the pews during Lent. Musicians from Hope Church have been meeting with musicians from Western Theological Seminary, Pillar Church, and the Hope College chapel, making plans for how we could join forces, showcase each of our strengths and learn from one another, as we sing old favorites and learn new ones from this new hymnal. We are planning a hymn festival for Sunday evening, **February 22 at 7pm** at Pillar Church. There will be musicians taking part from each group, including Rhonda on the organ and the Hope Church choir. Each group will lead the congregation in singing certain hymns, sometimes favorites of that group, or new songs we love and want to share. This will be a great time of music making together, so we hope to see you then.



## Events and Announcements continued

### Orientation to Hope Church Class

On Sunday, February 22, at 9:40 a.m., an Orientation to Hope Church Class will begin for people who are interested in learning more about Hope Church. The class will meet on three Sunday mornings, February 22, March 1 and March 8 at 9:40 a.m. in the Garden Lounge. A meal and a meeting with the Board of Elders for those wishing to join Hope Church will occur on March 22 after the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Public reception of new members will take place during 11:00 a.m. worship on April 12. Please contact Pastor Jill Russell or the church office (392-7947) if you would like more information. Please know that attending the class only indicates your possible interest in joining our fellowship, not your actual decision to do so.

### Pizza Sunday

The next Pizza Sunday is **February 22**.

### Brim Bunch

Brim Brunch will meet on **February 26th at 6:00 pm**. The program will be presented by Rich Cook on the topic "Critical Materials". When the media refers to critical materials, just what are they talking about? What are they? Who needs them? What for? Who has them? Why are they so important? If you don't know how to answer those questions, come and hear Rich Cook's answers. The menu is chicken and rice, applesauce, jello, green salad, Vienna bread, cherry cake or sugar free pudding. Pay \$8 at the door. The bus will pick up at Appledorn, Warm Friend, and Freedom Village. Brim Bunch does not discriminate against age. You are never too young to join! Guests are always welcome.

### Black History Month Town Hall Discussion

"What Can We Learn from Ferguson and New York?" **February 27th** at 6pm at Imagine Fellowship. All are invited to join as conversation is developed around race relations and how we as a community can embrace diversity.

## Thank You

*Dear Hope Church people,*

*Wishing you and yours-all members-a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Best wishes to you for a great holiday season. I've been wishing that for you for over 70 years now, and hope to do it for a few years more (I'm almost 94). I live in a retirement home here in Oklahoma City and doubt I'll be able to travel any more. My daughter Vicki lives a few miles away and watches over me. I really enjoy the Hope Church News and thank you for sending it.*

*Lots of love,*

*~Ruth Vrieling*

*Dear Hope Church Friends in Christ,*

*Thank you so much for all of the love, care, and support of our new family. Azaila is very easy to love but you helped to make it a little easier to care for her. Thank you!*

*~Ric and Beth Beltran*

*Dear Hope Church Friends,*

*Thank you for making my Christmas very special. Many, many thanks to those who visited and for your outstanding singing. It was such fun for me to be with you and be part of your loving Christmas spirit. Thanks also to those who sent the many lovely cards. I cherish your thoughtful messages. I have missed you all and have missed being a part of your fellowship. What a special way to celebrate Christmas.*

*With my special loving thoughts,*

*~Abby Price*

*We would like to thank the two groups of carolers for singing, delivering a plant, Christmas cards, and cookies on December 21st. It was very enjoyable and showed the Christmas spirit.*

*~Eleanor and Clarence Hopkins*

*Thank you for visiting me and singing the Christmas songs. Also, thanks for bringing me the plant and the cards sent to me at the church.*

*~Mary Martin*

## February Birthdays

- 13 Kay MacKenzie  
Care Group 3
- 20 Suzanne Buteyn  
Care Group 1
- 24 Ruth Donaldson  
Care Group 8

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

## Children's Ministry

*Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director*

### Lent devotions for Children and their Families

During the season of Lent make some time as a family to follow Jesus' journey through the city of Jerusalem by reading together, looking for hidden images and adding a sticker on the centerpiece. Each family with elementary age children will be given a Lent devotional packet before Ash Wednesday to start your journey together.

## Prayer Shawls

*Ann Anderson, Health Ministry member*



Knitting prayer shawls is a ministry – a ministry that does not expect anything in return. What does return to you are amazing blessings that one would never think possible.

A Prayer Shawl is a covering of knitted yarn, full of prayer, mystery and peace. It is knit with love and prayers to remind the wearer of a CIRCLE OF CARE without boundaries. Wearing a prayer shawl lets the prayers of the maker seep into the yarn as it is being made and then be transferred to the receiver, giving them the feeling of being safe, loved and held in prayer.

Hope Church's Prayer Shawl Ministry was started by Nancy Rock just before 2000. Remember the group of ladies sitting in the Gathering Area on Sunday mornings, knitting and talking many years ago? Originally the shawl knitting ministry was created by Vicky Cole-Galo and Janet Bristow in 1998. They are both graduates of the Women's Leadership Institute at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. At graduation they were encouraged to carry on the spirit of the class through some kind of project. At first they knit shawls for new mothers and women with breast cancer. The word spread and soon shawls were being knit for many purposes, including important celebrations.

One of the prayers used by Hope Church members as they knit is:

"Creator God, may this shawl be

a sign of your healing presence: may it warm those who are weary, surround those who suffer and encircle those who are in pain. May your gentle touch reach out to heal in the light of Christ. Amen."

We hope that our Congregational Care Group leaders will give these shawls to our members and friends who experience illness, a death in their immediate family or are stressed by caregiving or other family situations.

For directions on knitting a prayer shawl ask at the Hope Church office or contact Ann Anderson. Health Ministry hopes many of you will be inspired to join the knitting ministry.

## and finally

As the Season of Reconciliation continues, I'd like to share two voices from our Reformed Church in America denomination. The first is a bold call by the RCA General Secretary, Tom DeVries, for the RCA to listen to minority leaders. The second is from one such leader in Holland, my esteemed colleague Rev. Denise Kingdom Grier, whose ministry I am blessed by in our community. May God use their words to open our ears, transform our hearts and shape our actions.

~Peace, Gordon

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**The Time to Listen is Now.** I am inviting the voices of African American and other minority leaders to share perspectives on inequality and how the majority can listen and respond - sharing in the lament and working for change. We will provide opportunity to learn and to listen, gaining support for a united effort of the oneness of the people of God in all places, loving one another. We need to be willing to tangibly join together in Jesus Christ and have our faith in Christ build a bridge over the great divide. Racism remains. Pain is present. Injustice exists. We must listen to what it sounds like and feels like, and be willing to reach out for healing and reconciliation. The time to listen is now.

~Tom DeVries is the General Secretary for the RCA.

### TIME TO LISTEN: DENISE KINGDOM GRIER

W.E.B. Du Bois in 1903 said well what both sides of the black/white race debate must understand:

*"It is not enough for the Negroes to declare that color-prejudice is the sole cause of their social condition, nor for the white South to reply that their social condition is the main cause of prejudice. They both act as reciprocal cause and effect...Both must change, or neither can improve to any great extent."*

I am a bridge. A flawed, broken, biased, and sinful bridge. On one side I listen to understand and express love for my white brothers and sisters who try hard to love black bodies and black ways without actually seeing black at all—who benefit from genocide, patriarchy, slavery, the GI Bill, FHA loans, imperialism, white supremacy, and white privilege in general. I really do love them. Not by

word only, but by worshiping to the tune of their music, excusing comments that pierce my soul, and by giving freely of my experience, my story and my time to be a bridge.

I am a bridge. On the other side there is the need for me to confront, candidly and discreetly, the ills of people of color—mostly black people. I was reared in the black church, moved to a segregated south, went to a historically black college and have beautiful black children. But I am not blind to the faces of black people who commit violent crimes in our cities; I am not deaf to the ignorance that I often hear flowing from the lyrics of our music; and I am not unaware of the academic statistics that report black children as exponentially under-resourced, under-educated, and under-motivated. A simple lesson in American history will help explain how we arrived at this place, but even I grow weary of trying to move forward when internalized oppression holds us back. So I get to be a bridge.

As the nation divides over recent verdicts concerning black men slain by police officers on the streets in our country, I stand as a swaying bridge. I am weary from sitting in services that exclude my tradition; tired from standing up for black children viewed as a problem before they even speak; weak from bearing the burden of both white guilt and black indifference; and bowed from the anger, hate, and injury hurled from one side to the other. I am a bridge with no toll—the racial tax never gets paid for being the first (or only) bridge nearby. My car gets pulled over by police for no reason, my voice gets muted by the majority, my experience is discredited in church, and my history is denied in America. Yet I still stand as a bridge because God has placed me in these two denominations, at this time in history, to be one.

~Denise Kingdom Grier is lead pastor at Maple Avenue Ministries in Holland.

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# Hope Church News

February 2015



## March, April & May Greeters

*The Outreach & Hospitality Ministry*

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

### March Greeters

01 Marv & Barb Israels  
08 Mike & Michelle Israels  
15 Earl & Char Laman  
22 Bob Jerow & Joyce Teusink  
29 Steve & Michelle Johnson

### April Greeters

05 Deirdre Johnston & Jim  
Dumerauf  
12 Stephanie Krom & Norma  
Killilea  
19 Dan & Barbara Joldersma  
26 Leon & Jackie Knoll

### May Greeters

03 John & Barb Knoops  
10 John & Pam Koch  
17 Michael & Sarah Kolk  
24 John & Kathy Kools  
31 Mark & Cindy Laman

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.