



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 58, No. 4

April 2015

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Inserts:

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

**The deadline for the
May newsletter is
Monday, April 20.**

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

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HopeChurchRCA.org



Worship During Holy Week

Palm Sunday, March 29

8:30 a.m. Early Worship Palm Sunday Celebration

11:00 a.m. "Worship for the Way of the Cross"

We begin the journey through Holy Week with dramatic reading and music.

Maundy Thursday, April 2

6:00 p.m. Family Seder Dinner

This traditional Jewish meal remembers the events of the Passover told in the book of Exodus. There will be a pot luck meal as part of the Seder so please bring a dish to pass. Sign up for the Seder in the Gathering Area or by calling the church office (392-7947).

7:45 p.m. Tenebrae Service (Service of Shadows)

The service follows the path of Jesus' passion through the Last Supper and crucifixion and includes communion, prayer, scripture and music.

Good Friday, April 3

12:10 p.m. Community Good Friday Service

The Seven Last Words of Christ

Hosted at Hope Church and co-sponsored by First United Methodist Church, Third Reformed Church, New Community Fourth Reformed Church and the Washington School Neighborhood Connectors.



Easter Sunday, April 5

8:30 a.m. Early Worship Service

9:40 a.m. Easter Brunch

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Celebrate the risen Lord! Gordon Wiersma, preaching, and Jill Russell, liturgist; with choirs and brass under the direction of Brian Carder. *Church School will not be held.*

*Celebrate
the risen Lord!*

A Big Question and a Great Opportunity

As many of you know, Hope Church has enthusiastically become a Room For All congregation; that is, it is open and affirming to all. If the US Supreme Court affirms the right of marriage to all, (anticipated this June), clergy and congregations throughout the country will be faced with their own decision about blessing and officiating at religious marriage ceremonies for those of the same gender.

The Elders of Hope Church need your input! To that end, a taskforce has been at work to design a time for these important discussions. On four prime Spring nights, Wednesdays April 22 and 29, and then on Wednesdays May 13 and 20, from 6:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. you are invited to gather in our Commons for this process of discernment. Each time will include dessert, a time for centering worship and a chance to share your thoughts and convictions. Top notch facilitators from Holland and the national Room for All group will help us see the context, broader legal and historical aspects of marriage, our Reformed Church current stance and the context within our own Classis of Holland. We will ask you, "What do you want the Hope Church Elders to know about how you are, right now, pertaining to a decision for Hope Church concerning same-gender marriage?"

The complexity is real and the chance for growth is great. Please plan to come to join the discussion! You may not be able to attend all four sessions, but we hope you can. There will be a short, but very helpful list of resources, (on the web and in paper) in our church library, to help

us prepare. We need YOUR voice to be heard! Please plan to attend!

Part 1: Opening the Conversation -- Wednesday, April 22

- Marriages in the Bible - Tom Ludwig, Professor of Psychology
- Discussion on our views of marriage and holy relationships

Part 2: Marriages, Yesterday and Today -- Wednesday, April 29

- Legal and Historical Aspects of Marriage - Jim Piers, Professor of Sociology
- Panel of folks within same gender marriages - Moderator Cindi Veldheer DeYoung

Part 3: The Reformed Church of America (RCA) nationally and locally -- Wednesday May 13

- Presentation on the current situation of positions and actions of the RCA nationally, regionally and locally - Marilyn Paarlberg, Executive Director, Room for All

Part 4: Where We Stand -- Wednesday May 20

- Elders will express, "Here is where I am coming from, and where I am now on this important issue."
- Small group discussions using the questions "What does your head say? What does your heart say? What does your gut feel? What do you want the Elders to know about what you are thinking and feeling right now pertaining to this decision about same gender marriage ceremonies at Hope Church?"

Update from the Personnel Committee

It is with regret that we share the news that Glorie Orozco will not be continuing in her role as administrative assistant. We are so appreciative of her warm hospitality as the face of the church office and her many contributions to our staff. We will miss her. Glorie's last day was

Tuesday, March 10. If you would like to share any words of appreciation with Glorie, you can leave a note in the church office and we will send those to her. Pray for Glorie in this time of transition.

In this time of transition please direct all office administrative questions and tasks to Megan. Bruce tenHaken is graciously offering support in the office while we conduct a search for a new administrative assistant.

Polarity Survey Findings

Kay Hubbard, Personnel Committee member

We, at Hope Church, are part of a long history (more than 150 years!) and we want to be mindful of looking toward the future. Part of how we are “discerning our future” has been working with polarities. See Gordon’s “...and finally” piece in this newsletter for an introduction to the polarities concept and the four polarities we’ve been working with over the last 3 years.

Authors Barry Johnson and Roy Oswald wrote a book entitled Managing Polarities in Congregations: Eight Keys for Thriving Faith Communities. The polarities they identify are:

- Tradition AND Innovation
- Strong Clergy Leadership AND Strong Lay Leadership
- Inreach AND Outreach
- Spiritual Health AND Institutional Health
- Management AND Leadership
- Nurture AND Transformation
- Making Disciplines: Easy Process AND Challenging Process

Hope Church chose to work on the

first 3, and added one of its own (Individual AND Community). And we saw the fruit of that discernment and consideration in many parts of the life of the church over the last three years. We have wanted to “check” in on our polarity work with the larger congregation. We’ve been working for a long time trying to create a meaningful and straightforward way to think about how we are managing these polarities together.

It’s not been an easy journey. Most surveys set up questions as either/or choices, and this one deliberately tries to focus on how well the congregation finds leverage to practice both/and thinking. We also have a congregation that pushed back at the “corporate” language used in the survey, and in the less than rigorous survey framework that we started with. All that push back led to a better survey. And there is still plenty of room for improvement. But this survey gives us lots of material for consideration as we discern our future together. Surveys don’t actually do any discerning – they only help us focus our attention.

93 members of the Hope Church Community took the survey in February, and the results give us more to think about and do. First, our results on the polarities themselves were very good. In the perception of those who took the survey, we are a congregation that lives with both/and thinking and discernment. That will serve us well as we confront difficult issues in the future.

Perhaps the most intriguing results are the demographics of those who actually took the survey. Nearly 90% of those who took the survey are engaged with Hope Church at least once a week on average. More women than men took the survey. More than 90% of the people who took the survey are older than 50, with nearly half of the respondents over 65. This led to a lot of consistory discussion about what these results mean and what action is called for. And the survey results are just the beginning of our conversations. The conversations continue as we discern our future together.

Sabbatical for Pastor Jill Russell

September 2015 will mark 7 years of service at Hope Church for Pastor Jill. The Personnel Committee and Consistory have approved a sabbatical for Jill this coming fall of 2015. Watch for more details in the May newsletter.

ADULT EDUCATION

Sundays, 9:40–10:40 a.m.

April 5: Easter, no classes

April 12 - May 17: Lectionary-Based Bible Study

Room 106

Informed by insights from theologian James Alison and philosopher/literary critic René Girard, elder Curtis Gruenler will lead a discussion of lectionary texts.

April 12 - April 19: Our New Hymnals

Commons I

Hymn-singing is essential to our worship and lives of faith; our two new hymnals (*Glory to God* and *Lift Up Your Hearts*) attest to the importance of Hope Church Worship, and to the vitality of our faith as expressed in singing. These sessions will help us “weigh in” on our two new, hefty hymnals.

April 12: Cindi Veldheer DeYoung will lead the April 12 session, coaching us on the basics of worship theology, what the Worship, Prayer, and Spirituality Ministry at Hope Church does, and some of the typical reference points we use, like the RCA Directory for Worship. She will also help us understand why Hope Church chose two new hymnals instead of just one.

April 19: Rev. Joyce Borger (Worship Ministries, Director; Reformed Worship, Editor; Christian Reformed Church of North America) will walk us through the hymnal *Lift Up Your Hearts*. Joyce has worked with the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship, and has led numerous workshops on worship matters. She will help us become more familiar with the *Lift Up Your Hearts* Hymnal.

April 26 - May 3: Sport and Religion

Commons I

On April 26 Chad Carlson, assistant professor of kinesiology and an assistant men’s basketball coach at Hope College, will discuss the connection between sport and religion throughout recorded western history. On May 3 he will discuss the current relationship between sport and religion—specifically sport and Christianity. Sport has “used” Christianity to further its purposes, and Christianity has “used” sport to further its purposes too. How has this utilitarian relationship changed the ways we view sports? How has it changed the ways in which we look at religion?

Kids Hope USA

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



Our program year is nearing its conclusion. Students at Vanderbilt Charter Academy begin their Spring Break on March 29 and will not be returning to school until April 8. Since our last day of mentoring is May 3, that means Hope Church mentors will be meeting with their students no more than four more times this school year. Please pray with us that these sessions will be rewarding for both our Kids Hope students and their mentors. We pray that each will end the year together

on a high note; one that recognizes the gifts that each has brought to their weekly visits. At times, we know that the weekly sessions have not brought the visible progress for which our mentors hope, but we trust that seeds have been planted and that faithfulness to the relationship has been observed. Pray with us that in time, our Kids Hope students will demonstrate that their caring relationships with our mentors and prayer partners have borne fruit.

Comedications for Hoho Sapiens

Earl Laman, Health Ministry member



Were we all made to laugh? Did anyone have to teach a child to laugh? Do we need humor, comedy, ironic laughter, funny stuff and friends?

Growing up I remember lying belly-flat on the floor, little radar dish ears aimed at radio speakers, listening to Fibber McGee and Molly and their friends who each Tuesday evening dropped into their home on Whistle Vista Avenue. Often when Fibber would try to get a laugh, Molly would say, “Ain’t funny, McGee”.

Well, health matters “ain’t funny” either, whether you’re talking chronic illness, aging issues, setback illnesses, misery-making diseases, naggy symptoms, disabling injuries, genetic problems, gaining strength, or trying to maintain health and gain wholeness.

Ah, but humor, funny stories, ironic tales, jokes, cartoons (even puns) can be very helpful, uplifting, day-lightening, night-easing, mood-changing, life-balancing comedications. Given the realities of life and our vulnerable natures, we need to include, invite, intone and

engage the comedic in our daily diets.

Norman Cousins, 30 year editor of the *National Review*, suffered from a rare, highly painful, life-threatening form of arthritis. He put himself on a constant diet of laughable stuff, survived, and found great healing so that he wrote *Laughing is the Best Medicine*, then other best selling books on humor and healing, ultimately leading to lectures and courses in top medical schools. Type in “Norman Cousins” on your computer and get a wealth of understanding about laughter’s effects on us for healing!

Humor has a way of cracking through our obsessions, preoccupations and burdens. I remember reading a Peanuts comic strip on a Sunday night when I was loaded down with concerns about how effective I was being. Charlie Brown attached a note to a helium balloon which read, “God loves you.” Releasing it, he smiles imagining the note coming down to a King who totally changes the way he rules his people, or to someone who then becomes a doctor and heals many people, and a couple more such scenarios. The balloon comes down by Snoopy, who registers a big question mark! I laughed so hard, couldn’t quit, and literally fell out of bed, ultimately hugely relieved!

Our lives can get so occupied, heavy, worrisome, burdened and unbalanced. Certainly this becomes

acute with sickness, hard times and limitations. Humor can shake loose the tightened-downness and preoccupied stuckness so we regain perspective, creative thinking and a sense of our larger life.

Many of us see living the Christian life as serious business and barren of humor. Imagine my discovery of Elton Trueblood’s *The Humor of Christ*. What!? It was an eye-bouncing delight to read! He saw some of Jesus’ stories as cartoons: i.e., picture the guy with a 4 x 4 board in his eye trying to remove a speck from another guy’s eye. (I loaned this book, never got it back! It ain’t funny!)

Humor is “good for what ails ya” as individuals, families, organizations or communities. It moves us along “from moping to coping to doping to hoping”. Story-telling often erupts into funny stuff. For healthfulness, nourishing snacks of humor and laughter are uplifting daily. For more serious ailments, stronger doses from various sources can counter what we must deal with.

Even doctors can be funny, like the one who answered the worried teenager’s question, “Will my face break out?” by saying, “I don’t make rash decisions.”

It ain’t funny, but here’s a serious notion to ponder: Kierkegaard said: “Laughter is a form of prayer.”

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 Reconciliation Ministry

Paul Smith, Reconciliation Ministry co-chair

The Reconciliation Ministry is a relatively new ministry of Hope Church taking its focus from the scriptural statements that God intends the church to share in God's ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18) in which we seek to follow Christ's example of tearing down the dividing wall of hostility (Eph. 2:14) separating us from others. One major way in which the Reconciliation Ministry has sought to highlight this theme has been in the annual "Season of Reconciliation" at the beginning of each new year. Once again this year, our congregation was privileged to hear from individual members their experiences of reconciliation as they shared their stories during the 11:00 worship service. During these same Sundays a series of church school

classes on the theme of white privilege also helped us to understand how we might work toward reconciliation in our society.

Another area sponsored by the Reconciliation Ministry is the work of Restorative Circles. Several members of the ministry are active themselves in this work, and many others have been trained to extend this practice into the community.

Other groups and events supported by the Reconciliation Ministry have included the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance's Summit on Race and Inclusion, the Holland Gay Pride event, and the local celebration of Juneteenth. This year the ministry will also support the prison ministry

of "Shakespeare Behind Bars." In addition, two members of the ministry participate in "Friends of JFON" (Justice for Our Neighbors), an organization related to the United Methodist Church supporting people needing assistance with immigration issues.

The members of the Reconciliation Ministry are: Tom Arendshorst, Laurie Baron, Virginia Beard, Jane Dickie, John Koch (co-chair), Earl Laman, Ann McKnight, Paul Smith (co-chair), and Brian Yurk. We welcome suggestions from the congregation for new areas we might explore to extend God's reconciling love.

The next Ministry Highlight will feature the Building and Grounds Ministry.

Spend an Evening at Camp Think Hope

Lois Maassen, Community Ministry Chair



and activities, the evening will include a silent auction of items that reflect the creativity and talents of our members and friends. Past-year items have included

Please mark your calendar for the evening of May 16 to attend Camp Think Hope. The event will benefit Camp Sunshine, which offers a joy-filled summer camp experience for those with developmental disabilities. In addition to food, entertainment,

hand-sewn grocery bags, knitted shawls, babysitting and carpentry services, original artwork, and garden plants. The possibilities are as endless as our creative energy!

Start planning and crafting now; tickets will go on sale in the Gathering Area and through the church office on April 19. Auction items may be delivered to the church between May 3 and 10.

Plan to join us for fun fellowship, a celebration of our collective gifts, and to benefit Camp Sunshine and its spirit of love and acceptance!

“What Did You Do to Laura’s House?”

Ben Sikkink, Hope Church member



When the kids from the Haiti Foundation Against Poverty’s Hope House orphanage came out for their afternoon playtime on Saturday, March 7, one little boy came up to me and repeated the same phrase several times while pointing across the yard. Fortunately Mallery Neptune was next to me so I asked her for a translation from the Creole. It was “What did you do to Laura’s house?” What Larry Mulder, Jim Schut (from the Rockford area) and myself had done was take Laura’s house apart so that it could be reconstructed in another location in the compound. The walls and roof were 4’x8’ panels of 3” foam with aluminum glued on each side which snapped together with channels that they slid into for the corners of the building and the wall-to-roof connection. Once we figured out the trick to getting them apart it became relatively easy, and they were light enough that one person could carry a panel by himself. By the time I was being asked what I had done to Laura’s house we had all the panels down and the plywood removed from the structural frame.

The frame was heavy duty steel studs that had been welded together, so that

had to be moved in one piece. Monday morning, with the help of several of the Hope House staff and Keith Thurlow, Mallery’s father who had flown in on Sunday, we were able to lift that and carry it to the new location. The staff had also broken out some concrete and dug out an area for new plumbing lines to be put in. Once those pipes

were in place we began the process of putting the building back together panel by panel. Since the plumbing was now on the opposite end of the building than it had been, and we had to shorten the building by 8’, and a couple of panels were not re-useable, we couldn’t just put it back together the way it had been. We realized part way through the process that one side of the building had been a half inch taller than the other but by that point we already had several of the panels together and did not want to take them apart and restart. Even so, by Thursday morning we had the building back together before Larry and Jim had to leave. I stayed until Friday to help put the membrane roof back in place and work on some of the plumbing and electrical installations. We were not able to completely finish those items but at least the building was there to provide housing for several expected guests in the next two weeks.

In case you’re wondering, Laura is an intern whose original six-month stay

has now grown to over a year-and-a-half. The kids clearly love her and she loves them. If she is there during their playtimes, she is immediately surrounded by three or four of them. A new block and stucco house had been built for her and future interns in anticipation of this move.

The reason for moving the building was that the space it was in will become the new ‘forever orphanage.’ I’m sure it will be given a different name once built but this will be a building for pre-teen and teen-aged kids that have been in the care of Hope House for several years already but have neither family to return to in Haiti nor can they be adopted into other countries per Haitian law. Now they share space with 10-12 toddlers and infants and some early elementary aged children so having more private space will be very beneficial to their ongoing growth and development. This new building is what the benevolent moneys from the Living Hope campaign will be designated for.

Thank you for your prayers, for the supplies that were donated that Larry and I took with us, and for the financial contributions in support of this trip.



Events and Announcements

Women's Circle Meetings

Circle 1 will meet on Wednesday, **April 1 at 9:30 AM** at Hope Church in the Library. **Circle 2** will meet on Wednesday, **April 1 at 9:30 AM** at Hope Church in Commons II. **Circle 4** will meet on Wednesday evening, **April 8, at 7:00 pm**. Judy Vander Wilt will host the meeting.

Consistory Nominations

Nominations for a new class of consistory members are in. A congregational meeting to elect officers will be held after worship on **April 26**.

Easter Offering

This year the Easter Offering will help to replenish the Deacon's Fund. The Deacon's Fund is a special fund to assist those in need. There are a wide variety of needs that have been met this year, so our funds are down. We would like to be able to meet needs in the coming year as well, and that is why the Easter Offering will be designated for the Deacon's Fund. If you cannot be here on Easter, you can still turn in the Easter Offering envelope before or after Easter. Also, at the beginning of each month there is a yellow envelope marked "Deacon's Fund" in your envelope box. When money is put in one of the yellow envelopes, the money goes to the Deacon's Fund instead of the General Fund (green). We appreciate your support throughout the year, but we especially give thanks for this Easter season, remembering to help others as we contemplate the miracle of our risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

Coffee Time at Resthaven

The next Coffee Time will be at Resthaven-40th St. on Tuesday, **April 14 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!

Hope Church Readers

Hope Church Readers will meet on **Wednesday, April 15 at 1:00 PM** in Commons. THE INVENTION OF WINGS by Sue Monk Kidd will be discussed. Leading will be Stephanie Krom and Ruth Donaldson. Visitors are welcome.

Blood Drive

The Red Cross asked if we could schedule an extra blood drive in April. Since Commons I is not available on Sunday, April 19, we decided to schedule it for **Saturday, April 18**. A Saturday blood drive will be a new experience for us. The blood drive will be held from 9:45 am - 3:45 pm. As always walk-ins are welcome. See you at the blood drive.

Spring Garden-Clean Up

Gardeners! A clean-up extravaganza is planned for **Saturday, April 18 from 9:00 am til noon!** Plan to come for an hour or half a day – there will be plenty to do and people to tell you what to do! Bring your own equipment and gardening gloves. It is hoped to get the gardens in shape before Tulip Time!

April Organ Recital

If you were wondering why my March recital didn't include French Horn player Greg Bassett, with whom I often collaborate, it's because we are playing an entire recital together in April in Holland! Come out on Sunday, **April 19 at 3pm** to

First Reformed Church's series Free @Three to hear a program of music for organ and French Horn. This is the program we were all set to play last winter, but were snowed out then, and didn't want all that music to go to waste. Hope to see you then!
~Rhonda Edgington

Brim Bunch

The Brim Bunch will meet on **April 23rd**. Who will be the speaker? Dan Fisher, a long time member of Hope Church, will give a presentation of Ancient Maps and Celestial Navigation. He will share the results of his research into map-making before European explorers 'discovered' other continents! And he will share some theories about how these maps were conceived and created without modern methods. We will also have a little Celestial poetry - April being poetry month! Dan's wife, Kay Hubbard, will bring the poems. All this following the dinner with a very interesting menu: Pork/rice/celery casserole, sweet potato rounds, Strassburg salad, herby bread, once a year pudding. Reservations by phone, pay \$8 at the door. The bus will pick up at Appledorn, Warm Friend and Freedom Village. You are never too young to join. Guests are always welcome.

Hope Church Co-Ed Softball

Softball season is on the horizon! The season begins in May--people of all skill levels are welcome to participate. This is a great way to enjoy fellowship at Hope Church and get some exercise at the same time! Watch for the sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area. "Know Hope" (our motto) will have "more hope" if you become part of the team! Contact the church office for more details.

Celebrate the Work of the Center for Women in Transition on April 16



CENTER FOR
WOMEN IN
TRANSITION

For many years, Hope Church has generously given to and supported the work of the Center for Women in Transition, the only agency in Ottawa and Allegan counties dedicated to serving the victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse. Hope Church member, Jane Dickie, currently serves as President of the Center's Board of Directors. All Hope Church members, women and

men, are invited to attend the Center's annual fundraising event, Reach for the Stars, on Thursday, April 16 at the Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville.

The evening will include a live and silent auction, cocktail reception, elegant dinner, and keynote speaker, Diane Rosenfeld. Diane is the Director of the Gender Violence Program at Harvard Law School and has lectured extensively about various legal and social policy issues concerning violence against women. She will speak about campus sexual assault,

including response and prevention. The invocation will be given by Pastor Jill Russell.

This year's event begins at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are \$100 per person before or on March 27. After March 27, tickets are \$125 per person. If you would like to attend the event and sit at a table with other Hope Church members, register online at cwitmi.org/events and note "Hope Church" in the table host field. Also, please sign up in the Gathering Area by Sunday, April 5, so we know you're coming.

Thank Yous

I wish to thank all of you for the wonderful day, for remembrance of my years working at Hope. It was great to see all of you at church and to be able to visit with you. The Lord has been very good to me and I'm grateful for all the years he let me have with you folks. The gift was wonderfully accepted and the lunch was great. Cake too! Will try and stop by in the near future. Thanks so much!

Love,

~Karol Dogger

I was in the hospital with pneumonia when my dear friend, Ann Anderson, visited and brought me a beautiful Prayer Shawl knitted by someone in your church. It was such a welcome gift. I immediately wrapped it around my shoulders and felt comforted. It brought to mind the refrain from a spiritual, "Wrap Your Loving Arms Around Me" that I had been singing to myself since becoming sick. I was

in the hospital for 12 days and the shawl and its constant reminder of our Loving God and His prayerful servants kept me warm and grateful and confident of recovery. I cannot imagine a kinder more perfect gift for someone in distress. I am grateful to all of you at Hope Church and beyond who carry out this important ministry. Thank you so much.

~Susie VanKuiken

Dear Hope Church,

Thank you for hosting Girl Scout World Thinking Day! Everybody loved the space. It made our event feel special with such an interactive area. Also, it was very kind of you all to give it to us for free. Your help is greatly appreciated. Thank you for taking the time in letting us use your beautiful church!

Blessings, Troop 2979

April Birthdays

03 Char Laman
Care Group: 7

04 Barbara Boer
Care Group: 1

09 Gerard VanHeest
Care Group: 4

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

Youth Ministry

Beth Jarvis, Youth Ministry Director

“Your kids work harder than many adults. When can they come back?” There have been many satisfying moments since I started working with the youth here at Hope Church, but this one is one of my recent favorites. Fish Club signed up to cook up breakfast with Pancakes R Us, a volunteer organization serving Saturday morning breakfast to West Michigan’s impoverished. Our middle schoolers toasted bagels, packed snack bags, washed dishes, wiped down tables and poured coffee for over 250 new friends in our community, many of whom would not have a hot meal if not for organizations like this one.

And work hard they did. “What else can I do?” was a refrain I heard

constantly throughout our morning. When I asked the youth what their favorite parts about the morning were, answers like “cutting up the danishes”, “cooking potatoes”, and “knowing I am doing something that helps someone else” were fast and easy answers. In fact, this activity was so meaningful, we are going back this month.

Both our youth groups have a number of activities coming down our pipeline; activities that aim to be helpful, fun, and reflective. Both of our groups will volunteer their time at the Think Hope auction in April, and Fish Club will be sponsoring the Crop Walk, a great way to raise money and burn off some steam too. High

Hopes will be having a Lock-in at the church on March 27, before we gear up for a fundraiser for our mission trip to Brooklyn, NY – an all church bowling event! We have reserved a night at BAM here in Holland on May 3. 50% of all proceeds go to support our trip, so save the date on your calendar and look for more details to be communicated soon.



Washington School Neighbors Update

Janelle Lopez-Koolhaas, Neighborhood Connector



Washington School Neighbors

If you are anything like me, you’ve already walked around your yard or block—still brown and defeated-looking from months of snow—and tried to imagine what it will be in just a few weeks time. I have walked through our neighborhood and tried to imagine the Tulips on Washington Blvd, the tree branches once again bursting with green, and Lake Macatawa rippling freely with no icy lid.

There is no doubt that Spring in a climate like Holland’s also means the end of a long hibernation. As we revel in the melting snow and warmer air, neighbors and friends emerge from homes to take walks again, to go to the park, to play a sport, to work on the yard or send the children out to play with their friends in the sunshine. How will you re-engage with a neighbor with whom you haven’t spoken in months? Are there any new folks who have moved onto your block whom you can notice outside and give a welcome? Are there any projects such as Spring Clean Up, or planting a shared garden, or play dates at the park in which you can participate with the folks who live nearby? How can you deepen the connections you make with the folks who live where God has called you?

Washington School Neighbors is happily thinking of ways that we too can deepen and expand our network in the neighborhood this spring and summer. We are well into planning for this coming season of our 10th Street Community Garden, as well as encouraging neighbors to collaborate on gardening or landscaping on their own blocks. Stay tuned for events and activities that will be hosted for the community at the Garden! There will also be Ice Cream Give-Aways that folks can sign up to host in their driveways and yards. We are also eagerly looking for more “block connectors” to improve communications and keep growing our relationships even further in the neighborhood. If you are interested in participating in any of these, or have some great ideas for your own block, let us know!

and finally

Here's something that a number of you have participated in, that many of you probably aren't aware of, and that I'd like to invite everyone to think about a bit: POLARITIES. 'Polarities' refers to the idea of two qualities that may seem in contrast or tension with each other being brought together as necessary parts of a whole; the idea that in many cases it is most helpful not to think about 'either/or' but about 'both/and'. A very basic example of this is to think about breathing: what if you took the process of breathing and divided up into two groups, one group responsible for breathing in and the other for breathing out? – that wouldn't work! – breathing in and out are necessary parts of the whole.

That may seem obvious, but then think about something like activity and rest. There are those who focus on the need to be active, working, productive; others emphasize the need for rest, replenishment, relaxation. The wisdom of polarities is that too much emphasis on either one will be detrimental, while an awareness of touching on both brings out the best qualities of each. It's not so much about things being in equilibrium, but about there being a flow between the qualities – like breathing! – that keeps one mindful of the possibilities and pitfalls present in each.

That's a very brief summary of polarities, so what about polarities at Hope Church? Over the past couple years, especially through the help of Hope Church member Kay Hubbard, leadership has started to look at some polarities that are present particularly in the life of a faith community. That discussion identified four important polarities for Hope Church to consider:

TRADITION & INNOVATION
INDIVIDUAL & COMMUNITY
CLERGY LEADERSHIP & CONGREGATIONAL
LEADERSHIP
INREACH & OUTREACH

These are four polarities that get at the heart of the dynamics present in a congregation, dynamics that can provide a healthy flow or that can become skewed and lead to dysfunction. How do we get a sense of where Hope Church is at with those polarities? – that's where a number of you came in. In February, close to 100 of you participated in a Polarities Survey designed to give a snapshot of how those dynamics are at work at Hope Church – thank you! In early March, the Consistory reviewed the input from the survey, and we were pleased that the survey input indicated a pretty healthy flow in each of those four

polarities in our congregation. There are of course places of both strength and of concern identified, but what the input received from this survey can do is affirm some healthy dynamics present in our life as a congregation. And we receive this picture of health not as an end in itself (that would be very un-polarity like!) but to see how the healthy flow present in our congregation can be used as we look ahead in ministry with our Mission Statement and Themes. That's what Consistory and the Discerning Our Future Team and Ministry Chairs will be doing in the coming months, and you can look for further ways to offer input and participation. And as we do so, I want to describe one further polarity at work among us as a faith community:

IN GOD'S HANDS & IN OUR HANDS

This polarity emerged through discussion with leadership as a way to describe an overarching dynamic for us to pay attention to as a congregation. This polarity seeks to express the way in which faith both trusts God as the One to whom we belong as God brings the Kingdom of God into being ~ In God's Hands; and responds to God's call to use our gifts to love and serve in witness to God's kingdom ~ In Our Hands. As I've reflected on it, this polarity helps describe very deeply and provocatively what I see going on in my faith and in being a part of this community of faith: I see that God is at work in ways beyond any particular time or place, and that I am called to faithfulness in the time and place God gives to me; I see the Spirit of God nurturing, teaching, gifting, challenging God's people in ever new ways, and I see people using their gifts in creative and life-giving ways; and I also see the temptation of "leaving it all up to God" so that we become passive, or of "it all depends on me" which can lose sight of God's presence and provision. I think there is a lot of wisdom to mine out of this polarity, and I wonder what dynamics you might see in it for your faith and for us as a congregation (Individual & Community!).

As I've learned about and reflected on polarities, you begin to see polarities at work everywhere! And I hope that you along with me can see how helpful this polarities vision can be in bringing together dynamics within and around us into a flow that promotes health and vitality. Look for ways in which these polarities continue to guide our shared mission as a congregation and the witness we each carry out in our daily lives (that's a polarity :)).

~Peace, Gordon

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Hope Church News

April 2015



Participate in the 35th Holland/Zeeland CROP Hunger Walk



The sun is shining, there's a warm breeze on your face, the birds are singing, and tender shoots are emerging from the soil. It makes you want to get outside and go for a walk! How about letting your walk do double duty? Join others in the 35th Holland-Zeeland Area CROP Walk on Saturday April 25 or Sunday April 26 and help raise funds to end

hunger in our area and in the world.

To celebrate 35 years, donors have agreed to add an additional \$350 to any group's total if they have 35 sponsored walkers or raise \$3500. That \$350 could...

- help an AIDS orphan learn vocational skills to support themselves and their siblings
- give three hungry families of five emergency food for a month
- send seven women to literacy class and change their lives forever

Think about those all over the world who have to walk every day,

whatever the season or weather, for water, firewood, or food. Let's step up to the challenge and have \$350 added to Hope Church's total.

Stop by the CROP Walk table in the gathering area on Sunday mornings in April to learn more and pick up your registration envelope. If you can't make the walk dates, you can walk yourself during the week, and if you can't do a walk at all, you can still sponsor our Fish Club walkers. We can do this!

~Judith Boogaart, CROP Walk recruiter