



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 61, No. 1

January 2018

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Inserts:

- *January Calendar*
- *Lectionary*
- *Consistory, Staff & Ministry Chairs List*

The deadline for the February newsletter is Monday, January 15.

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday:

9:00am - 5:00pm

Friday: Closed

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HopeChurchRCA.org



Beyond Us and Them



Season of Reconciliation 2018 January 14 - February 4

More information on page 2

Credit for image: book cover of "Life at the End of Us and Them" by Marcus Peter Rempel

Season of Reconciliation 2018

January 14 - February 4

Adult Education

Sundays, 9:40-10:40 am

There will be no Adult Education on January 1.

January 7 - Beyond Us versus Them: A primer on mediation services in the area

January 14 - Beyond 🤔: Social Media and Our Divisiveness, facilitated by Pastor Beth Carroll and Dr. Jayson Dibble, Associate Professor of Communication at Hope College

January 21 - Beyond the Binary: Gender Identity in the New Millennium facilitated by Bev Schroeder
This session will be held in Room 106.

January 28 - Psalm 117 and the End of Us and Them facilitated by Travis West from Western Theological Seminary

February 4 - Summary of the topics of the Season of

Worship

Early Worship 8:30 am, Liturgical Worship 11 am

Witness to Reconciliation

Each Sunday at the 11 am service throughout the Season of Reconciliation, a member of our congregation is asked to speak to the notion of personal reconciliation in their own lives. They will share their stories of reconciliation, passion, and sacrifice in order that we may all humanize the stories of others and gain better insight into the body of Christ that we share with one another. These stories have proven over the course of the years to be some of the most memorable and powerful aspects of the season.

Book Study

Wednesdays, 6:45 - 8:00 pm
coffee and dessert provided

January 17, 24, and 31

Healing the Heart of Democracy by Parker Palmer

This book offers the call for "the courage to create a politics worthy of the human spirit" as Palmer brings a spirituality of compassion and hope to the political divisiveness of our time. Palmer explores 5 "habits of the heart" to foster creative capacity in the daily connections of family, congregation and community which can be brought to our political convictions.

All are invited to be a part of this study. The books and a sign-up sheet are available in the Gathering Area. Our Wednesday schedule will begin with coffee and dessert followed by an hour of discussion.

Restorative Circles Facilitator Training

Thursday, February 1, 9am- 4pm;

Friday, February 2, 9am- 4pm

Training for Restorative Circles has been a part of the Season of Reconciliation for the past 6 years. The mission of restorative circles melds easily with the message of reconciliation that is central to the season. Training Dates will be February 1st and 2nd, 2018. Further information will be posted in the bulletin. Any questions can be directed to Jill Russell or Ann McKnight.

More information on page 8.

New Member Sponsors

Outreach & Hospitality Ministry

The Outreach and Hospitality Ministry is looking for anyone who would like to help make new members of Hope Church feel welcome and find their niche in their new church home. Even if you are a relatively new member yourself you can help, as you may understand better what is appreciated or needed. We are hoping to have a good-sized pool of people who could be ready to be assigned to new members once the class is finished. The frequency of sponsorship will depend on the size of this new group. Are you interested? Do you have questions? Please continue to consider this and pray about this. More information will follow!

Congregational Meeting: January 21

Our annual congregational meeting will take place on Sunday, January 21, from 12:15-2:00 p.m. in the Commons. We will begin with a shared meal and conversation around tables. The Consistory will provide a soup lunch. The meeting will include a presentation and vote on the 2018 budget, as well as other important information about the coming year of ministry at Hope Church.

- If your last name begins with A – O, please bring bread to share.
- If your last name begins with P – Z, please bring a salad.

Transportation will be provided for residents of the Warm Friend and Freedom Village at 2:00 p.m (as well as the usual bus run at 12:15 p.m.). Please plan to attend!

Staff Feedback

Personnel Committee

The personnel committee invites anyone with praise or concerns relating to staff to contact Jane Dickie, chair. This invitation comes because of a change in procedures during the congregational meeting in January. Previously during the discussion of the budget, staff were invited to leave the room and congregants were asked if they had any comments regarding the staff. In reviewing this procedure, it was very clear to all of us that people were disinclined to raise any issues in that public space and that it is inappropriate to have conversations about personnel publicly. Therefore, the personnel committee decided to discontinue that practice. We are not however discouraging anyone from raising personnel concerns that they might have. In our personnel practices we do conduct extensive reviews of all staff members annually. If you have any questions about this change in policy or issues that you would like to raise about personnel you are welcome to contact Jane Dickie.

Church Library Donation Request

Christian Education Ministry

Looking to declutter your house in the New Year, and hoping to find a good home for some of your extra books? Members of the Christian Education ministry are seeking donations of good-condition books we can add to our church library collection.

Our plan is to have at least two categories of books in our church library. One will be a more traditional collection of books that have longer-lasting significance for Hope Church, such as titles written by members, ones about local or church history, or books supporting a church ministry. These books will be kept on a set of shelves (still to be installed) near the church office, and there will be a sign-out process. For the other category, we've decided to follow a "Little Free Library" or "take-one-leave-one" model. That is, books will not need to be signed out but can be taken freely.

With that in mind, if you have books you'd be willing to donate for the second category, please simply drop them off at the church office. Keep in mind that Christian Education ministry members will sort through donations, and extra or unneeded titles may be passed on to another worthy cause or organization. If you have books you'd like to donate that you think should be included in the more permanent collection, please contact Sarah Kolk, co-chair of the Christian Education ministry.

We know that we have many avid readers and booklovers in our congregation and we are excited to develop a church library that will support that culture!

Kids Hope

Vicki Rumpsa, Kids Hope USA Director



This being the first newsletter of the New Year made me think of all that is "new" with Kids Hope. Well, first I am new to this job as Kids Hope Director. That newness has been exciting for me but also a challenge. Because I like to bring new ideas to an already good program, this past 6 months has kept me busy. In addition to me there are others that are new to Kids Hope who include a new area director, 1 new Hope Church mentor, 1 new substitute mentor and 3 new children we are serving at Vanderbilt Academy.

There was some newness when we recently celebrated together at a Christmas Fun Day at Third Church. New this time was the cookies and milk for an after school treat, new games such as Bingo, Giant Jenga and Ball Bag and an after activities pizza dinner that the student's parents and family were invited to join us. All

together we had about 130 people all eating and visiting with each other. This new part of the event was a great way for mentors to get acquainted with the parents of the child they mentor.

Looking ahead there will be some new things happening in the New Year. Later this month we will be holding our annual Appreciation Dinner. We are trying something new by inviting spouses to join us if they would like. We will also introduce some new books and games that have recently been purchased for use during the Kids Hope mentoring hour. In February I will be hosting a new casual get together at the Brew Merchant where I hope our larger Kids Hope Family can come and enjoy some good food, drink and conversation. That same month we will be offering a new information

meeting for those parent's who want to learn more about the opportunity for their child to attend Camp Geneva. We always hope that more kids sign up for camp but know that most parents don't have a clue on what this camp is so this will give them a chance to ask questions and get more information. We'll see if this gets more kids to sign up.

Also, make sure to check out the Kids Hope bulletin board in the gathering area by the church office. The

bulletin board changes monthly with new information - so make sure to stop by!

That's a lot of new stuff but to me it makes my job so fun and rewarding. This program is built on a strong foundation, molded by 3 previous directors, and now ready to grow into the New Year. Thank you for your prayers as we journey into 2018.



Kristen Gray Wins National Award from Counseling Association



Congratulations to Hope Church member Dr. Kristen Gray, who is the associate dean for health and counseling and directs the Counseling and Psychological Services office at Hope College, for receiving the national President's Award from the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD)!

The award was presented, the citation notes, "in praise for many years of meritorious service and valuable contribution to the

Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors." Gray has been active with the association as a presenter and program facilitator for several years. She was honored during the national 2017 AUCCCD Conference, held on Saturday-Wednesday, Oct. 14-18, in Denver, Colorado.

For more information, please see: <https://hope.edu/news/2017/campus-life/kristen-gray-wins-national-award-from-counseling-association.html>

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.

Worship, Prayer & Spirituality Ministry

Cindi Veldheer DeYoung, Worship, Prayer & Spirituality Chair

The Worship, Prayer and Spirituality ministry is the consistory's agent for fulfilling the Book of Church Order's instructions that it "provide services of worship and other activities and organizations in the church's life for the spiritual benefit and growth of Christ's people." Well, that sounds perfunctory. We are a lively group, in reality, and the liveliness erupts from the conviction that worship services and components that are done well are good for us, and are the most honorable way to offer our praise to God. In short, we care deeply about worship, from the picky details to the grand expressions that unite us with the Creator, Spirit, and Son who summon us to praise and prayer.

It is thrilling to hear responses from the congregation to worship, from spontaneous laughter to spoken comments that note appreciation for music, art, liturgical movement, a particular hymn, or the cohesiveness of worship. We also deliberate

over comments that may indicate that an aspect of worship was not helpful. We watch for distractions; we also attend to ways that the ebb and flow of people's needs and spiritual expressions may necessitate something different from what we've done before.

WPS collaborates with the Sacristy Guild, which coordinates many details of our worship environment. We interact with the choirs, organists, other musicians, artists, and pastors in planning for seasons and special services. Several members of the Worship, Prayer, and Spirituality Ministry serve as our link to consistory, and help us coordinate worship leadership as well as the celebration of sacraments. Most recently, we requested that an Art Committee oversee the collection of art held by Hope Church, and assist with installments.

In addition to fulfilling the BCO, we are

guided by the Directory for Worship in the RCA, which tells us this:

"Because worship deals with reality, it has structure, for we are called by God to praise him, acknowledge our sin, experience grace, and go forth to live in gratitude. As God encounters us in many ways, so there may be variety in the response of worship, but because it serves as a corporate model for Christian life, it also has structure and sequence." (see: <https://www.rca.org/resources/directory-worship>)

The particular structures at Hope Church that focus our worship are the pulpit, table, font, organ...and the whole sanctuary, of course. The structure of our worship is also a way to focus our worship.

You are welcome to enervate our liveliness by continuing to help us to know what has served you well, and what you observe may need to be changed.

The next Ministry Highlight will feature the Congregational Care Ministry.

Washington School Neighbors: Time for Relationships

Lisa Kasten, Neighborhood Connector



Washington School Neighbors

In our world today, relationships are falling away. We are too busy and always plugged in to some form of technology. We have to make an intentional decision to pull away from our electronics and search for ways to create something more. It is so easy to feel alone when everything we do is dictated by our attachment to technology and not actual people.

We pay bills online, we communicate with friends and family via social media, we hand school children computers in order to complete assignments and to make it easier for parents and teachers to communicate. Yet we wonder why so many people are lonely and struggling with depression. I believe it's lack of relationship... good old fashioned, face to face, have a conversation and interact with someone, relationship.

I started working with a community organization a couple months ago called Washington School Neighbors. They seek to connect residents and create relationships through hosting community building events and facilitating two community gardens. WSN works in collaboration with neighbors in order to help them find solutions to issues that they feel are important to the area in which they live. WSN does not seek to be the driving force but to listen to the residents and help foster relationships that will allow them to find ways to use the gifts and talents that

already exist in the neighborhood. Washington School Neighbors is just one piece of a much larger puzzle. The churches, businesses and individuals that support WSN all have the same desire: to see residents living life in community and in relationship with one another. Outside of any financial, ethnic, religious or other differences, we are all members of the same community.

I believe the work that is being done is more crucial now than ever before simply because of disconnect that technology has brought to our society. When we host an event and get to see children's smiling faces and parents stepping away from their busyness long enough to connect with their children, it is worth it. When we hear stories of families and individuals connecting through the cultivation of food through the gardens, it is worth it. When residents walk through the neighborhood and see more familiar faces and feel more connected to those that they may not have otherwise noticed, it is worth it.

I have learned so much more about the community in which I live and my neighbors by just walking through the Washington School Neighborhood and participating in these community building events. We are not just the Historic District with the big beautiful homes. We are struggling mothers and fathers and students trying to make their dreams a reality. We are rental units and two family homes. We are transitional housing and addiction recovery housing. We represent all races and backgrounds, and we all deserve to be in relationship and to be seen.

I have lived in this area for more than twenty years, but have never felt more connected to my neighbors

than I do right now. I look forward to watching how all of this work unfolds. Everyone has gifts and talents to offer and WSN desires to connect neighbors with opportunities to live out their gifts while serving others and creating relationships. In this present age of uncertainty we have the opportunity to take back a piece of what technology has stolen. If we can help foster relationships outside of any social barriers that may exist, then we can help create a more inclusive community. WSN believes in an Asset Based model and relationships could be our most valuable asset.

Future Events:

- **Block Connector Info + Pizza Night on Tuesday, Jan. 23 from 5:30-7pm at the Herrick District Library (on the Main floor meeting room):** Find out how to become more involved on your block as well as find out the perks of being the first to know about the community resources to you. **If you are interested in learning more about becoming a block connector in the Washington School Neighborhood, email christen@washingtonschoolneighbors.com.** Go from the Block Connector Info + Pizza Night to the "Know Your Neighbor" series hosted by Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance at the Herrick Library from 7-8:30pm in the Auditorium.
- Thank you for supporting the work of Washington School Neighbors through our Photo Fundraiser this December. If you missed out but would want to participate in a **future mini-session**, please sign up by emailing info@washingtonschoolneighbors.com with "photo" in the subject line and you will be the first to know about any future WSN mini-session.

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- **Suicide Prevention Program** at 7pm on Jan. 9 at Nuestra Casa (253 W. 15th St.) RSVP to info@washingtonschoolneighbors.com
- **Sign up to be a part of the WSN Asset Library.** More info. coming soon but pre-register or show your interest in this shared resource library by filling out information at this link: <https://washingtonschoolneighbors.com/community-lending-library/>

WashingtonSchoolNeighbors.com

Facebook.com/WashingtonSchoolNeighbors

Children's Ministry

Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director

Nursery Joy

A huge thank you to Margaret Buckley and the youth interns who have staffed the nursery this fall. We have lots of children who are finding joy in seeing their friends in the nursery each week. Please consider signing up to help in the nursery in the next few months. Adults of all ages can share their gifts with these young ones. Sign up with a friend if you would feel more comfortable. It is a wonderful way to get to know the young children of Hope Church and their families. There are always youth to help with the lifting and chasing. The children love readers, laps to sit in and someone to give them special attention. Please contact Margaret Buckley or Jocelyn Van Heest if you have any questions about how you could be of service. You are welcome to spend some introduction time with Margaret any week to see the wonderful new space and the flow of the morning. Sign up on the sheet by the nursery or contact Jocelyn. Thanks for considering being a part of this nurturing ministry. Come enjoy the youth of Hope Church and our youngest members.

January 7 - It's an EPIPHANY Celebration

The church school class will share a time of preparation and celebration on this Epiphany Sunday. The children will hear stories, decorate the Epiphany cakes, and learn more about the importance of this special day.

During the 11 AM worship service, the 4th and 5th graders will help with the collection of the white gifts in the sanctuary. The Kindergarten through 5th graders will meet together during Children in Worship to continue the celebration.

Special Celebration – please join us!

The congregation is invited to join them after the service to share some epiphany cake and also a recognition and celebration of Ann Anderson's dedication to Children in Worship and the children of Hope Church! She has touched the lives of so many children and also the Children in Worship leaders by sharing her knowledge, faith and commitment.

How Congregational Care and Pastoral Care Happens

Have you ever wondered how the pastors and congregational care ministry members learn about people's needs for care? The very simple answer is they know what people tell them.

So here is a request from your pastors and congregational care ministry: please let the office know if you are facing a hospitalization or any other time in life when you might appreciate some outreach and care.

We welcome those calls. If you know of someone going through something and have their permission to pass it along to the pastors, please call and let them know. They much prefer to be told the same thing 15 times than to miss an opportunity to reach out in love to someone in a time of need.

One final note: **if you are ever hospitalized tell the hospital staff to call your pastors if you would like them to know.** This should be asked of you during intake. It doesn't always happen so don't hesitate to bring it up yourself. If you ask them to call the church, they will do it. If you want only the pastors to know and not the church office, ask for a chaplain and pass along this request to them. They will then handle the request discreetly and contact the pastors directly.

Events and Announcements

Winter Cancellations

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

The church office will be closed on Monday, December 25 for the Christmas holiday. The church office will close early at 3 PM on Tuesday December 26, Wednesday December 27, and Thursday December 28. The church office will also be closed on Monday, January 1 for the New Year's Day holiday.

Women's Circle Meetings

Circle 1 will meet in Commons II on January 3 at 9:30 A.M.

Circle 2 does not meet in January.

Circle 4 will be on Wednesday, Jan. 10 at 7:00 pm. Jam Fike will host the meeting at her home and we will discuss Lesson 3 in our Hebrews study book.

White Gift Offering Epiphany Sunday, Jan. 7

On Epiphany Sunday, Jan. 7, bring a personal care product for a child or woman, wrapped in white tissue paper. These gifts will be brought forward during the offering, and later given to the Center for Women in Transition, a local agency assisting women and families caught in abusive relationships and empowering a hopeful future for them.

Coffee Time at Resthaven-40th St.

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. The next Coffee Time will be at Resthaven-40th St. on Tuesday, January 9, 2018, at 10:30 a.m. Mark your calendar, and come for an hour, all are welcome!

Hope Church Readers

Hope Church Readers will meet on Wednesday, January 17th at 1:00pm in Commons II. Jean Martin will lead our

discussion of the book, Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles. Hope Church Readers is a group of women who come together once a month to share a love of books and good conversation! Consider joining us in the New Year! New members are always welcome! If you would like more information, call Lauren Heyboer.

January Pizza Sunday

The next Pizza Sunday is scheduled for January 28.

Next Know Your Neighbor Event:

"None of The Above", January 23rd 7:00pm -8:30pm, Herrick District Library. This second event in the Know Your Neighbors Series will bring together people to share their world view and perspective who do not claim a faith tradition. They may call themselves "spiritual but not religious" or "secular humanist" or any number of other descriptions that could be called "none of the above" when asked to identify within the traditional interfaith categories.

Restorative Circle Facilitator Training:

February 1 and 2, 9am-4pm This two day training is for anyone who is eager to support the creation of strong communities, families, work environments and congregations. You will learn how to communicate and collaborate during times of conflict or even just around different points of view. You will develop skills that can be put to practice immediately in informal ways and will also learn how to facilitate a formal restorative circle as well. For more information and to register go to <https://hrcircles.wordpress.com/> or call the church office at 616-392-7947.

Thanksgiving Offering for Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates:

Thank You for Your Generous Support! The Thanksgiving Offering raised over \$2500 to support the work of

Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates in our community. Thank you for your support for this important service of advocacy and hospitality in the Holland community.

2018 Offering Envelopes

Envelopes for 2018 offerings are available for pick-up in the Gathering Area. They are displayed alphabetically. If you are unable to be in worship and need your envelopes mailed, please call the 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.

The 2018 Telephone Directory will be available in January. You can pick up a copy in the gathering area or in the Hope Church office.

Flowers for Worship



We are blessed to be able to express the beauty of God's creation in our worship services. If you would like to be a part of the flower ministry,

please sign up on the flower calendar on the music room windows, or call Joyce Teusink. Celebrate a special occasion in your family, or give flowers in honor or memory of a loved one. A short note will be included in the bulletin for your celebration or memorial. We have florists who assist us for a fee, or you can deliver your own arrangement. Call Joyce Teusink with questions or for more details. Thank you for making our worship service even more vibrant!

Youth Ministry

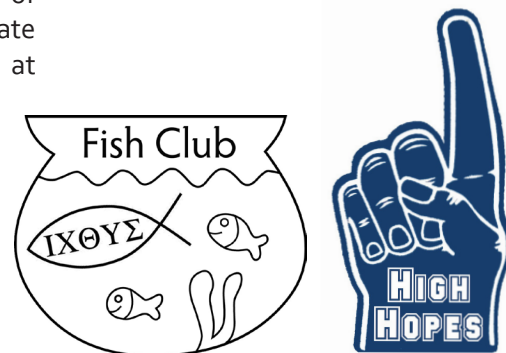
Beth Carroll, Assistant Pastor of Discipleship

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matthew 22:37-40

In a world of increasing divisiveness, bullying, antagonism, and "me first" attitudes, what does it mean to follow Jesus? This question and the scripture passages that help us engage it is our theme this year in High Hopes and Fish Club. The news, social media, and political climate serve to draw lines between us and our youth feel the effects just as strongly as the adults. We believe the call of Jesus to love our neighbors not only serves as a way to be "in the world but not of it", it is also the way forward in cultivating unity.

One of the ways we are practicing this theme is through including others in our activities. Not only are youth encouraged to bring their friends to youth meetings and events, but we are also combining forces with the youth program at New Community Fourth Reformed Church. New Community Fourth is one of our neighboring churches on west 15th street, pastored by Rev. Jonathan Brownson. Our first combined event was a bowling party a couple of months ago, where we laughed, ate snacks, and threw bowling balls at the gutter, occasionally missing and hitting the pins on the lane. Oh wait. That was actually how I bowled that night. This event was such a success that we have invited New Community Fourth to our winter retreat at Cran Hill ranch January 26-28. We look forward

to not only deepening relationships with our Hope Church friends, but also getting to know new people too. For this retreat, the three Hope Church pastors will be teaching on "Sticky Atonement", helping us gain a richer understanding on what we can learn about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Stay tuned to hear what we learn about God and each other!



Wisdom of the Wounded

Karen Mulder, Hope Church member

The word of God speaks to the fact that we are all wounded and broken. It is also true that every one of us is tasked with encouraging and supporting those who are hurting. Yet very few of us feel confident to do so.

Wisdom of the Wounded is a perspective on how to support those who are hurting with love. It has been Karen Mulder's passion to listen. To listen and give time and space to those who are suffering, those who have suffered and those who desire to offer their support and care. Wisdom of the Wounded is a place. A place where this perspective can be shared.

To be able to meet someone in their suffering is challenging – to know what to say to them and to know how to be present with them in it. It is a gift to be in a position to care for someone. Through Wisdom of the Wounded, Karen Mulder is a guide to help you with this gift.

Visit WisdomoftheWounded.com for information and stories from individuals who have been wounded which will help you become a more compassionate and caring friend.

Trip to Japan

Rhonda Edgington, Associate Director of Music and Organist

If you are curious about Mark and Rhonda Edgington's recent trip to Japan, pictures and short stories about their trip can be found on Rhonda's webpage. <http://rhonda.edgington.info>, Under musings:blog.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

17	Vern Boersma
28	Dorothy Robinson

If you are 75+ years old and would like to be listed in the birthday column, please contact the church office at (616) 392-7947 or office@hopechurchca.org

Health Ministry

Ginger Clark, Parish Nurse, R.N.



HEALTH MINISTRY

Life is a complex web, interconnected in every dimension. When a relationship is out of sorts, we feel out of sorts spiritually as well, or we can't concentrate at work. If we're eating fast food in the car between meetings, exercise is the last thing on our minds. Sitting all day at work and all evening in front of the television can lead to lying awake in bed staring at the ceiling.

Model for Healthy Living is a tool for individuals to use to take charge of their own health, and it reflects that true wellness is not just about our bodies but about the interconnectedness of body and spirit in the ways that we live. Here are the seven key dimensions of the Model for Healthy Living.

Faith Life. Faith traditions vary widely, but at the core, a faith life helps us build a relationship with God, our neighbors, and ourselves. This affirms that we are body-and-spirit beings created and loved by God. We can explore a richer faith life and enjoy the benefits this experience will bring to overall wellness.

Medical Care. Doctors have education and experience, but we know ourselves better than any doctor ever will. Even doctors sometimes are the patient. When it comes to medical care, we bring something important to the conversation. We can build a partnership with a health care

provider that lets us participate in managing our health care.

Movement. When we consider the way the parts of the body are hinged and rotate and reach in every direction, it's easy to see that God means for us to move. It's part of how we celebrate our body-and-spirit connection to God. No matter what our physical activity level is now, we can discover ways to enjoy movement.

Work. We were made to work, and the value of work is intrinsic. We can appreciate the skills, talents and gifts we bring to our work situation, whatever it is, and find meaning for our life through our jobs or volunteer commitments.

Emotional Life. It's easy to turn to unhealthy habits in response to stress, whether it's food, mindless television, excessive spending, alcohol or something else. In the moment, we feel better, even though we know

it's bad in the long term. Through understanding our feelings, it's possible to make changes to manage stress in healthier ways.

Nutrition. Good nutrition builds strong bodies that can lead us to being whole people better connected to God. What we eat matters. Whatever our eating habits are now, we can increase our understanding of how food affects our overall well-being and make food choices with more intention.

Friends and Family. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit were the very first relationship. Even God exists in community. Coping with life is sometimes hard, but friends and family make it easier. Giving and receiving support through relationships contributes to our health.

~Excerpts from an article in Church Health Reader written by Rev. G. Scott Morris, MD.



and finally

As I sit to write this article today it is exactly one week until Christmas. We have just lit our pink candles in the Advent Wreath – the candle of joy or sometimes called the Mary candle. I've been thinking about Mary a lot and noticed that others have as well. In the past week I must have seen three or four posts on social media offering a remedy to the "sentimentalized" versions of Mary we so often settle for this time of year. One was an article taking an un-sentimentalized view of the Magnificat. Another was a re-write to the contemporary Christmas song "Mary Did You Know" doing much the same thing: recovering the strong vision of justice that Mary knows from the prophet Isaiah and foresees in the coming ministry of her son.

We need a similar movement to disavow any sentimental notions we might bring to the concept of reconciliation. I was re-reading a book recently that I highly recommend to you if you haven't read it yet: *Dear White Christians: For those Still Longing for Reconciliation*. When I first read it several years ago I was preparing to lead an adult education session in the Season of Reconciliation. The first part of the book deconstructs why the language of "reconciliation" (which is a beloved buzz word among progressive Christians when thinking about race) is so problematic as to be unusable as a term all together. You can't reconcile something that has never been conciliatory to begin with. The pressure to "reconcile" can feel to many people of color laboring for justice as just one more instance of someone crying "peace, peace when there is no peace." I have not abandoned the category of reconciliation all together. But I have recognized that I am no longer satisfied with a sentimentalized vision for what the work of reconciliation includes. It is a labor of love that takes us deep into soulful work and the territory of equity and justice as well as the terrain of forgiveness and mercy. We cannot have the latter without the former.

I love a good reconciliation story. Truly, I do. The kind where impossible obstacles are overcome and understanding and forgiveness breaks through the bitterness and division we all know too well. Those are miraculous stories that are shot through with grace and can bring a tear to the eye as we marvel at the ways that with God nothing is impossible (to circle back to those stories of Mary once again). We have heard some of those stories in the witnesses to reconciliation members and friends of Hope Church have shared over the years. They are powerful.

But I also know that some of us have been slogging through the hard, hard labor of reconciliation where there is no happy ending in sight. And there may never be this side of glory. These stories don't lend themselves so easily to a "Witness to Reconciliation". But as I talk with people about those very messy efforts to work for justice in the face of inequity or to learn how to let anger go despite someone's refusal to repent of the pain they have caused or figure out how to be sane in a situation that is anything but that, I bear witness to the work of reconciliation. It's hard, hard work. Impossible in some instances. But it is our work nonetheless. It is the work God has given herself to and in her persistence and unwillingness to let us go, I find great hope. So as we move into the Season of Reconciliation in the month ahead, I encourage us to welcome all that this season can bring.

Peace to you,
~Pastor Jill

Prayer from *Praying with the Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace*
by John Phillip Newell



Not because
we have made peace this day.
Not because
we have treated the other as our self.
Not because
we have walked the earth with reverence today
but because there is mercy
because there is grace
because your Spirit has not been taken from us
we come
still thirsting for peace
still longing to love
still hungering for wholeness.



Hope Church News

January 2018



Communication Sign Ups

Communications Taskforce

Congregational Emails

Sign up to join our congregational email list by calling the church office or signing up online at this link: <https://goo.gl/xCUceB>.

Hope Church Volunteer Blog

To receive email notifications of Volunteer Opportunities, go to our Volunteer Blog at: <https://lifeofhopechurch.wordpress.com/>.

Then, on the right side of the page under "Follow Blog via Email", enter your email address and hit "follow".

Text Reminders

To receive texts about Hope Church cancellations, service time changes, and special events, **text "@hoperca" to the number: 81010**. To receive via email rather than text, send an email to: hoperca@mail.remind.com.

You can also sign up to receive texts or emails for:

- **High Hopes (High School Youth):** Text @highh to 81010 or email: highh@mail.remind.com
- **Fish Club (Middle School Youth):** Text @fishclub77 to 81010 or email: fishclub77@mail.remind.com

January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Year's Day - Office Closed	2	3 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 9:30 am Circle 1 4:00 pm Adult Education 5 pm Stewardship & Finance 6 pm Executive Committee 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 7 pm Community 7 pm Chancel Choir	4 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	5	6
7 8:30 am Early Worship 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Communion</i> <i>Gordon Wiersma, preaching</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 12:15 pm Epiphany Celebration 6 pm Fish Club Tank Time	8 11 am REST Support Group 7 pm Consistory & Board of Elders and Deacons	9 10:30 am Coffee at Rest-haven 40th St.	10 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 7:35 am Discerning our Future 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 7 pm Circle 4	11 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	12	13
14 Season of Reconciliation 8:30 am Early Worship 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Jill Russell, preaching</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 11:15 am 6th and 7th Grade 6 pm High Hopes Unplugged	15 4 pm Outreach & Hospitality 5 pm Fellowship 6:45 pm Congregational Care	16	17 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 1 pm Readers 4 pm Endowment 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 6:45 pm Season of Reconciliation Book Study 7 pm Chancel Choir	18 11 am Communications 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	19 <div>Diners Club Weekend</div>	20
21 Season of Reconciliation 8:30 am Early Worship 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Joint Youth Sunday Prep 9:40 am Chancel Choir 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Beth Carroll, preaching</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 12:15 pm Annual Congregational Meeting	22 11 am REST Support Group 6:30 pm Christian Education 7:00 pm Worship, Prayer & Spirituality	23	24 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 12 pm Building & Grounds 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 6:45 pm Season of Reconciliation Book Study	25 10 am Disability Concerns 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	26 <div>Joint Youth Cran Hill Weekend Jan. 26-28</div>	27
28 Season of Reconciliation 8:30 am Early Worship 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am G.I.F.T. Class 9:40 am Chancel Choir 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship <i>Cassie Nelson-Rogalski, preaching</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 12:15 pm Pizza Sunday 12:30 pm Caring for Creation	29	30	31 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 6:45 pm Season of Reconciliation Book Study			