



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 61, No. 2

February 2018

In This Issue

Mardi Gras.....	2
Music	2-3
Adult Education	3
Witness to	
Reconciliation	4
Ministry Highlight	5
Kids Hope	6
Poetry Corner	7
Events &	
Announcements	8-9
Deacon Fund	10
At Home with the	
Word Lectionary.....	10
And Finally.....	11

Inserts:

- February Calendar
- Wisdom of the Wounded Calendar

The deadline for the March newsletter is **Sunday, February 18.**

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



Ash Wednesday Service

Ash Wednesday, February 14

6:00 p.m. Dinner*

7:00 p.m. Worship

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.

**Sign up in the gathering area to help with set up and clean up! Set up starts at 4 p.m.*

Wednesday Evening Lent Series

We will be joining with Grace Episcopal Church (555 Michigan Ave.) for their Wednesday evening Lent Series.

6:30pm

Eucharist Service

7:15pm-8:45pm

"Values in Action" Program
at Grace Episcopal Church

The program will be utilizing video from the Trinity Institute Conference held in New York City in February and will engage us on the intersection of faith and contemporary issues.

February 21: Video of Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, discussing the values that fuel her work and how values help create movements for change.

February 28: Video of Pádraig Ó Tuama, poet, author, and leader of the Corrymeela Community, exploring stories where values emerge, bump into each other, conflict and create opportunities for deep dialogue about important values in contemporary life. We will look at values in action, and values in tension.

March 7: Video of Deirdre Good, Andrea Weiss, and Adnan A. Zulfikar describing a national, non-partisan campaign called American Values Religious Voices that brought together scholars from a diverse range of religious traditions to articulate core American values after the national election.

March 14: Video of Elizabeth Edman, priest and political strategist, articulating her conviction that our job as people of faith is to show the world that the power of God is a real thing – to make it plainly, graphically, authentically visible in the world. For our commitment to have any impact – for our values to translate into action – we must do something harder: we must cultivate this commitment as a virtue. We must live it.

March 21: Video of Mark Bozzuti-Jones and Winnie Varghese, priests, authors, and Trinity Church Wall Street's directors of Core Values and Justice and Reconciliation leading us in reflection on how we put values into action.

Children's Ministry: Mardi Gras Celebration/Shrove Tuesday Feb. 13

Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director



It is that time in our church year calendar to celebrate Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday. This is traditionally a time of last chance merrymaking before the disciplines of Lent. The last few years we have had a lot of fun enjoying a pancake dinner with the opportunity to top your pancakes with all the trimmings. On Tuesday, February 13th from 6-7:30pm everyone (of all ages) is invited to come enjoy the meal and to participate in a variety of activities. It is a wonderful time of fellowship. The activities include a parade with bead necklaces, noise makers, masks and games for all. The music and the activities may be energetic but there will also be a time for reflection as we prepare for the season of Lent. Please sign up in the Gathering Area so that we'll be sure to have an extravagant amount of food and craft material as befitting a Mardi Gras Celebration. Come and enjoy!

Note: Please watch for communication about a Children in Worship Workshop for parents coming up on February 25 during Pizza Sunday, connected to Pastor Gordon's Doctor of Ministry project!

A Chance to Lament - Sunday, March 4, 3 p.m.

Rhonda Edgington, Associate Director of Music & Organist

Some of you took part in the discussion group a year ago during Season of Reconciliation, based on Soong-Chan Rah's book *Prophetic Lament*, in collaboration with other Holland churches. In a continuation of that theme, and because many of us feel the need for more opportunities for collective lament, we will be welcoming a Chicago group to Hope Church, Plural Guild and The Many, who will help lead us in a service of lament. To quote from their website:

"The Plural Guild is a gathering of artists interested in doing worship in ways that speak honestly to the lives we live today. We have come together to create music, poems, prayer, visual art and liturgy that embrace questions and doubts, as well as faith. To make work that can be used in worship gatherings that is welcoming to all. That has eyes wide open to the pain of the world. That speaks of a God who came to this earth in Jesus to show us the way to love and live fully alive lives. Work that invites participation versus perpetuates performance."

The Many will join us in worship on Sunday morning, March 4 and share a few musical selections with us. In the afternoon at 3pm, through music, liturgy, art, poems, and prayers, we will have a chance to lament together and privately. You may be interested in hearing more about their music - you can check out their website, pluralguild.com.

On their facebook page, their song All Belong Here, has gotten lots of attention, and is a compelling call for welcome. Please join us for this special event, sponsored by the Reconciliation Ministry and Worship, Prayer, and Spirituality Ministry, on Sunday, March 4.

Two Musical Events in February at Hope Church

Rhonda Edgington, Associate Director of Music & Organist

We will be graced with an embarrassment of musical riches in February at Hope Church, so no need to despair over the weather - we can self-medicate with music!

On Sunday, Feb 4 at 3pm in the sanctuary, Rhonda will be joining with local musicians and adjunct members of the Hope College music faculty, to present a recital with music for organ with trombone, bassoon, and saxophone. Genevieve Beaulieu, Adam Briggs, and Adam Graham are putting their musical creativeness together, and coming up with lots of new sounds and sonorities for you to enjoy. The grand finale may even involve some number for all of those instruments together! This concert will be free, and last about an hour. Genevieve and both Adams are great players, and this will be a unique concert opportunity!

On Tuesday, February 27 at 7:30pm in the chapel, you will have to chance to hear a recital of solo piano music by visiting Chicago musician Rob Clearfield. Rob is a young jazz pianist who is touring the Midwest to promote a new album of solo piano music being released in February. He plays jazz that is influenced by all kinds of sounds, innovative, contemplative, and thoughtful. He will have CD's for sale at the concert, admission is free.

If you are interested in hearing some of his music, you can check him out at robclearfield.com.

Adult Education: February

Sundays, 9:40-10:40 am

February 4: Summary of the topics of the Season of Reconciliation

February 11 and 18: Dealing Faithfully With Dementia

The thought of having to deal with dementia bewilders and frightens many of us. Dementia challenges our usual ways of thinking about how God relates to us and how we relate to God, and tests the faith, hope, and love of all of us.

February 11: We will explore how a neglected day in the Easter Season, Holy Saturday, can give us a scriptural "space" to think about the experience of dementia.

February 18: We will reflect on scriptural approaches to personhood in relation to people with dementia, and how dementia can help all of us to learn what it means to say that our lives are hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3).

In both sessions we will consider some ways to give encouragement in Christ to those who suffer from dementia, and those who care for them. Leading this class will be the Rev. Dr. Suzanne McDonald, Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Western Theological Seminary, who has been reflecting on theological and pastoral issues raised by dementia for many years. She teaches a course on "Ministry, Aging, and Dementia" at WTS and has also presented on dementia at numerous churches, the Hope Academy for Senior Professionals and Calvin Academy for Lifelong Learning.

February 25 & March 4: Well-Being

We will focus on two facets of well-being by calling attention to: "I AM a living being!" Presenter: Earl Laman.

February 25: Born to Become- Mysteriously we know we are- alive? "have our being"? We'll gaze at phenomenal features of "be-coming" through experiences and realities emanating from therapeutic relationships.

March 4: Born to Belong- we are not isolated and independent beings. Thus, we'll view the promise and complications of "be-longing", once again via experiences and realities arising from therapeutic journey.

Witness to Reconciliation: Unbreaking the Window

Greg Olgers, Hope Church member

In my role as a writer, I've had a chance to hear powerful testimonies about reconciliation, and when invited to speak today I hesitated to share from my life, because how can my everyday reflections compare? World War II enemies meet in friendship decades later. People in Rwanda and Sierra Leone work to heal the scars of civil war. An activist and prisoner in Northern Ireland is inspired by a fellow inmate from the other side, and before and after release works for peace and a brighter future.

And yet, this topic has weighed heavily upon my heart for quite a while, and especially across the past couple of years. I don't think there's been a time in our country's history when we've needed to focus on reconciliation more. I say that mindful of the division of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and of the Civil War a century before that.

I worry that the Civil War might be an apt comparison today, especially the Border States where neighbors could be bitterly opposed. I feel like we're all living in Border States now. We're neighbors, but not necessarily neighborly in how we perceive or treat one another. We even get to construct our own reality by watching the news and following Tweets by people we agree with, and can ignore or demonize the rest. And the mistrust and state of the world seem to be growing worse. I've heard it said that it's like we're living in the paragraph in a history book that appears just before a statement like, "And then 'fill in the blank' happened..."

Years ago I read an essay that made the following analogy based on dealing with vandalism. The idea was that if someone threw a rock and broke a window in an abandoned building, it should be fixed right away because more vandalism was less likely if the

building was kept in decent repair. In the same way, the author said, larger problems in society might be avoided if smaller ones are addressed.

Here's my broken window and very modest reconciliation story: I'm an easily frustrated driver. I know it shouldn't, but it really bothers me when someone, say, cuts me off if they'd only need to wait a few seconds for a clear road. Now, I'm not a road-rager, and it bothers me just as much when it happens to someone else. But my uncharitable thinking runs rampant — not because of what was done, but because of how I perceive it, which is often along the lines of, "That narcissist doesn't think the rules apply to him," or, "People like him are why the world is a mess."

But then, it doesn't take too long before I misjudge an oncoming car's speed, or do something else weird behind the wheel. I know that I didn't do it on purpose, but why, then, is it so easy to assume the worst about others?

Is it possible to reconcile with someone you haven't met? Can there be reconciliation if the other person doesn't even realize there's a problem? Does the way that technology and mobility affect how we form community and perceive others make a broad view of reconciliation necessary?

Driving in our metal boxes, we become anonymous and the others on the road likewise become anonymous metal boxes. The same can happen when we're online, or on social media, or in front of the television. We are literally separated from each other's humanity, and when that distance combines with assumptions about who others are, how they think and why they do what they do, they can

become little more than obstacles.

Now, not everything everyone says or does is reasonable and just, and there is right and wrong, but I'm a broken window when I draw conclusions about other drivers without understanding them, because I'm reflecting and contributing to a larger problem. I can at least give them the benefit of a doubt, and I should also think beyond my preconceived notions and cultivate that same approach where it really matters. Maybe it's someone on the right with whom I disagree; maybe it's someone on the left. Maybe it's someone of a different race, or from another country. What's behind what they've said and done and what they value? Is there more there than my separation from them will allow me to see? Is there a way to bridge the difference?

Sure, if we come to issues thinking only of ourselves, smug in our certainty and superiority, we might feel more comfortable or achieve some sort of short-term advantage. But if others are doing the same, how do we imagine things will turn out in the long run?

The choices I make day to day won't fix the world, but I don't get to let myself off the hook with excuses. Restoration has to start somewhere. And so my reconciliation story is about being mindful of the little things because they're where patterns begin; it's about removing the log from my own eye instead of worrying about the speck in others'; it's about extending grace even when it's difficult. And it's a work in progress, hopefully to eliminate at least one broken window instead of throwing a rock.

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.

Congregational Care Ministry

Sharon Arendshorst, Congregational Care Chair

The Congregational Care Ministry operates within the circle of loving care and support that Hope Church members give to one another. We are the team that coordinates and offers congregational care in a variety of ways. We provide the organizational umbrella over funeral lunches, Christmas caroling (poinsettias and cards), baptismal banners, and the knitting ministry. CCM members work with the church office to facilitate meals and transportation and help coordinate responses to other requests. Along with the pastoral staff, CCM members visit and build relationships with those individuals within our congregation who are no longer able to attend church. We send cards, make calls, offer prayers and provide a listening ear when we visit.

We invite all members to join us in being intentional in your care for friends and members of Hope Church by contacting the office and asking to be added to the volunteer blog and/or prayer link. The volunteer blog is sent from the office with special requests that need to be filled (meals, transportation, reading, home repairs...). If a request fits your skills and schedule you may then volunteer to help fulfill that particular need. Whenever someone authorizes the office to share a prayer concern, you will receive an email and the privilege of praying for that person or concern. In addition, we encourage you to call the office whenever you have a personal concern or joy to share, so that our circle of care might enfold you as well!

The Congregational Care Ministry continues to make changes as it grows into its new model of caring. Our latest change is to welcome

the Health Ministry members onto Congregational Care Ministry Team rather than continue to operate as a stand-alone committee. This will allow Parish Nurse Ginger to be connected with and advise the larger care ministry. It will add the educational and health components of caring back into CCM. We will be assessing this new partnership in June and if we decide to propose this as a permanent change we will become the **Congregational Care and Health Ministry**.

January was the first meeting of the combined ministries. Pastor Jill and Ginger led a time of visioning and sharing that helped the group to clarify what is most meaningful about the work we share. Some of the themes that came forward were: the opportunity to help people tap their passion and joy, to affirm that people are more than any current health problem or physical limitation, to encourage people in their efforts to find a holistic approach to their spiritual and physical well-being, and to walk with people through their struggles offering prayer, encouragement, and support. We continue to discuss how we can best support congregational and team members as we love and care for one another and friends of Hope Church. We have two initiatives we are launching this winter to support this vision. You can read about these below. Please consider joining the Congregational Care & Health Ministry or participate by calling the church office and volunteering as suggested above. Please let us know how we might further support you and your caring for one another.

Friday Morning Yoga Class

Discover stability and freedom in yoga! Join Kim Mulder, Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT200), for a 7-week yoga series. In this class series we will explore the foundational principles of alignment that provide support in each pose while opening the heart, mind and body. Kim is trained in the method of Anusara yoga which maintains that yoga is about feeling steady in the asana (pose) as well as encountering the possibility in each asana. Come if you are new to yoga! Come if you have a yoga practice already! Going back to the basics can help you go deeper into your practice. **WHEN:** Fridays at 8:15-9:15 AM, February 9 – March 23. **WHERE:** Hope Church, 77 W. 11 Street, in the Gathering Area. **Cost:** Class will be \$10/class at the door or \$60 if you wish to purchase all seven classes on the first day. Cash or check written to Kim Mulder accepted.

Care Well Challenge 2018

The Congregational Care and Health Ministry is encouraging the entire congregation to take up the Care Well Challenge issued by Karen Mulder through her ministry Wisdom of the Wounded. You can see an introductory video about the challenge on her website: <http://wisdomofthewounded.com/care-well-challenge/>. The concept is simple: do what you can to watch for people who need connection and care and reach out! You can do this in your family, neighborhood, work place and of course, within our congregation. Karen is offering encouragement and helpful tips through a monthly calendar. We will be publishing that calendar on the back of the church calendar in each newsletter but you can access it online at the website above as well.

Kids Hope

Vicki Rumpsa, Kids Hope USA Director



Have you noticed that the Kids Hope symbol is a heart wrapped around a child? How appropriate for this month of February as soon heart shaped valentines will be exchanged along with heart shaped candies, stores will reflect the theme of love with all their red and white decorations and florists will keep busy filling their vases with red roses and blowing up heart shaped balloons. Thinking of all this alongside the Kids Hope symbol brought together some thoughts on why the heart symbol is so appropriate for Kids Hope. Here are some of my personal thoughts....

First of all the Kids Hope heart is an open heart. Let me explain. A few years back I actually

retired. I had worked for 35 years in a variety of child related careers and was ready to have more time to be a Grandma and to travel. For 5 of the next years I worked part time but even that was too much after awhile. So just when I thought I was through with any work commitments, the job as Director for Kids Hope at Hope Church came along and my heart was opened to the possibility. God knew I had certain gifts that needed to be shared and he knew just how to tug at my heart. It has opened my heart to a whole new world of mentoring and caring for children in a unique way and I can say with an honest heart that I am glad to be back working!

Not all hearts are open and even some are broken. Take a look at the Kids Hope symbol and you will see how that figure of a child is trying to rise above a broken heart. The kids we serve in Kids Hope often come to us with broken hearts. Currently one little boy's father has Lou Gherigs Disease and is in a wheelchair and cannot communicate. This little boy needs his mentor to be there for him when he wants to talk about his Dad. Another girl is struggling in school and is not getting helped at home. Her broken family consists of a father in jail and a mother working 2 jobs. She relies on her mentor to listen to her stories about her troubled life. Our mentors are there for children like these to help them rise above the brokenness to become the best they can be.

Speaking of our mentors, I believe they have the most wonderful wrapped around hearts. You can see this visibly when they arrive for their Kids Hope meeting and their student comes to them with open arms and they hug. So glad is the child to see their mentor again! Our mentors wrap their arms around their child in many ways including working with them through their homework, attentively listening to their stories and inviting them to play a game or do an activity where they both are involved and enjoying some heart felt fun. The hearts of our prayer partners also adds to the mentor/mentee relationship as they wrap the mentor and child in prayer and make praying an important part of the Kids Hope experience.

So...."love is in the air" as they say and love is at Vanderbilt School everyday of the week as our mentors make their visits, as students greet their mentors and as I continue my job to make sure our hearts are cared for, supported and doing our best to show the love of God to others. Happy Valentines Day!

Poetry Corner

Sometimes we need a little room for poetry. Not a lot, just a little corner.

Poetry can help us face the more challenging moments in our lives and world, it can give us a place to go, a place to be when experiences of any kind are far too much for words.

With this in mind at the coming of a new year, Randy Smit and Rhonda Edgington are going to try something new by hosting a little monthly poetry gathering, right here in the Hope Church news!

Over the years we've become aware of how many gifted writers there are here at Hope Church, and who knows how many lovers of language there may be?

If you're a person who loves poetry, loves to write or longs to explore new ways to "put life to language and language to life," we'd love to hear from you.

Starting next time, we'll plan to highlight one author each month with an original piece, as well as a favorite poem or something that is speaking to them right now.

For this first edition, let's all enjoy a poem Pastor Jill read in Early Worship the first Sunday of the new year, a blessing for this 2018...

We look forward to seeing where this journey of words takes us. Hope to hear from ya.

For Those Who Have Far to Travel

An Epiphany Blessing

by Jan Richardson

If you could see
the journey whole
you might never
undertake it;
might never dare
the first step
that propels you
from the place
you have known
toward the place
you know not.

Call it
one of the mercies
of the road:
that we see it
only by stages
as it opens
before us,
as it comes into
our keeping
step by
single step.

There is nothing
for it

but to go
and by our going
take the vows
the pilgrim takes:

to be faithful to
the next step;
to rely on more
than the map;
to heed the signposts
of intuition and dream;
to follow the star
that only you
will recognize;

to keep an open eye
for the wonders that
attend the path;
to press on
beyond distractions
beyond fatigue
beyond what would
tempt you
from the way.

There are vows
that only you
will know;
the secret promises
for your particular path

and the new ones
you will need to make
when the road
is revealed
by turns
you could not
have foreseen.

Keep them, break them,
make them again:
each promise becomes
part of the path;
each choice creates
the road
that will take you
to the place
where at last
you will kneel

to offer the gift
most needed—
the gift that only you
can give—
before turning to go
home by
another way.

Events and Announcements

Winter Cancellations

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

Restorative Circle Facilitator Training:

February 1st and 2nd from 9am-4pm. This two day training is for anyone who is eager to support the creation of strong communities, families, and work environments. 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 392-7947.



Women's Circle Meetings

Circle 1 will meet at Freedom Village on Wed. Feb. 7, at 9:30 A.M.

Circle 2 does not meet in February.

Circle 4 will meet on Wednesday, February 14, in the Youth Room. The meeting will begin after the Ash Wednesday service.

Coffee Time at Appledorn

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 Appledorn on the terrace on Tuesday, February 13, 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, February 21st at 1:00pm in Commons II. Jackie Heisler will

lead our discussion of the book, *News of the World* by Paulette Jiles. New members are always welcome! If you would like more information, call Lauren Heyboer.

Brim Bunch - Feb. 22

Brim Bunch will meet for dinner and program on Feb. 22 at 6:00 pm. Judy Parr will educate and entertain with a talk about the wives of United States presidents. We all remember some of them - Jackie and Laura - but Judy will tell us about many more and interesting facts! The dinner menu will be chicken and rice, applesauce jello, green salad, church baked bread and 'once a year pudding'. The cost is \$8 payable at the door. Reservations are requested. The bus will pick up from Freedom Village at 5:30 pm. Mark your calendar.

February Pizza Sunday

The next Pizza Sunday is scheduled for February 25.

Orientation to Hope Church Class:

On Sunday, March 4, at 9:40 a.m., an Orientation to Hope Church Class will begin for people wanting to learn more about Hope Church. The class will meet on three Sunday mornings, March 4, 11, and 25 at 9:40 a.m. in Commons 2. Please contact the church office (392-7947) if you would like more information. For those who are interested in joining Hope Church, a dessert meeting with the Board of Elders will occur on April 9 at 6:30 pm. A public reception of new members will take place during 11:00 a.m. worship on April 22. You are cordially and warmly invited to attend these orientation classes whether you are interested in membership at Hope Church or simply wanting to learn more about this congregation.

Christmas Offering

The Christmas Offering raised \$6,567.25 for relief efforts for Hurricane

Irma. Hope Church is partnering with RCA congregations in St. Thomas and St. Croix to respond to short-term relief and long-term reconstruction. The Christmas Offering will support the ongoing recovery work that the RCA congregations there are involved in, allowing them to channel resources to where support is most needed. Thank you for your generous support!

Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony (ACEH) Potluck - Feb. 17

Sat, Feb 17, 2018, 5 pm: Annual Heart 2 Heart Community Celebration. A Potluck and Cultural Sharing Party, hosted by the Alliance for Cultural and Ethnic Harmony (ACEH). Music, performances, silent auction, family activities, fabulous food, fun, fellowship. Everyone is welcome! At First United Methodist Church, 57 West 10th St, Holland.

Out on the Lakeshore Announces Holland Pride 2018

Who: For the LGBTQ Community, allies, and all! **What:** A festival! With live music, great food, sponsors, vendors, lots of great people and lots of fun. **When:** Saturday June 23, 2018 starting at noon. **Where:** Holland's Centennial Park and The Park Theater. How can I get more information? Follow the Out On The Lakeshore Facebook page and check out our website, outonthelakeshore.org as more details for the event come together and our sponsor list grows! You can also email outonthelakeshore@gmail.com to get on our mailing list for updates. How can I get more involved? We need sponsors, participants, and help with the planning and hosting of this event. Come to a PRIDE volunteer meeting at the Out On The Lakeshore Community Center, 451 Columbia on Tuesday, January 30 from 5:30-7:00pm for pizza, refreshments and the opportunity to join the PRIDE team.

Thank You

Dear Hope Church carolers,
 Thank you for gracing my mom with your music and your warm presence.
 My mom would announce her song of the day every morning. When she was no longer able to sing, you did it for her.
 I am deeply grateful.
 ~Dawn Boelkins

It was so good to receive all those Christmas greetings from our friends at Hope while we are receiving medical treatment in Portland.
 ~Dick & Norma Noordijk

Thank you! Thank you!
 Such a beautiful way to end the year at Hope Church!
 Carolers at my door with a bright red bag full of
 greetings from my Hope Church family.
 As I read each one and prayed for that person,
 I realized that I personally knew most of them.
 What a blessing! What a joy!
 ~Trudy Vander Haar

THANK YOU, Hope Church Family, for the special Epiphany party you gave me last January 7. Being a Children in Worship storyteller has enriched my life so much during the past 30 years. I am grateful for the support of our Children's Minister, Jocelyn, and our Pastors, Gordon and Jill. I have appreciated the freedom and flexibility to incorporate many ways of responding to the stories Hope Church children hear from the Bible. I also want to THANK Hope Church members for their many ways of caring while I slowly heal from the spinal compression fractures during this past year. Ed and I are grateful for your prayers, food, cards, transportation and many other ways of providing care for us.
 With our love and gratitude,
 ~Ann and Ed Anderson

Beautiful music. Lovely poinsettia. Yummy cookies. A wonderful Christmas. Blessings from our favorite angels.
 Love,
 ~Terry & Nancy VandeWater

We appreciate all of the love and comfort you gave us through this difficult time.
 ~Jean DeWeert & Family

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

13 Kay MacKenzie

20 Suzanne Buteyn

24 Ruth Donaldson

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

Deacon Fund Needs Your Support

Hope Church members are generous people, having supported the Deacons' Fund with donations of over \$8,400 in 2017. However, the needs of the congregation as well as the local and global community continue to grow. Disbursements from the Deacons' Fund in 2017 totaled over \$15,000 (the difference made up by a balance from the previous year and special gifts targeted for specific needs). Thus, the Deacons' Fund currently has a historically low balance.

Here are some of the ways the fund was used in 2017: gifts cards for gas and groceries, automobile repair expenses, rental assistance, utility assistance, dental assistance, hurricane assistance, surgery assistance, and assistance for people living through the Flint water crisis.

These types of immediate needs are not always provided for in our annual budget, but the Deacons' Fund allows our pastors and staff to offer relief on a short term basis when our members and others in the community don't have other resources. It is monitored by our financial administrator and senior deacon to make sure it is used responsibly according to Hope Church ministry goals.

The Board of Deacons asks that you take note of the yellow envelopes placed in your giving box every few months. The first one for 2018 will be dated for February 3rd, but you can also give at any time of the year by writing Deacons' Fund in the memo line on your check.

Thank you for your support of this fund, and please continue to give generously. It can make the difference between hope and despair when someone faces a crisis.

At Home With the Word

Sunday Lectionary as Daily Bible Readings

February 1-4

Thursday 1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Friday Mark 1:29-34
Saturday Mark 1:35-39
Sunday **Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**

February 5-11

Monday 2 Kings 2:1-6
Tuesday 2 Kings 2:7-12
Wednesday Psalm 50:1-2
Thursday Psalm 50:3-6
Friday 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Saturday Mark 9:2-9
Sunday **Transfiguration Sunday**

February 12-18

Monday Genesis 9:8-17
Tuesday Psalm 25:1-10
Wednesday Ash Wednesday; Psalm 51:1-17

Thursday 1 Peter 3:18-22
Friday Mark 1:9-11
Saturday Mark 1:12-15
Sunday **First Sunday in Lent**

February 19-25

Monday Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
Tuesday Psalm 22:23-31
Wednesday Romans 4:13-15
Thursday Romans 4:16-25
Friday Mark 8:31-38
Saturday Mark 9:2-9
Sunday **Second Sunday in Lent**

February 26-28

Monday Exodus 20:1-17
Tuesday Psalm 19:1-6
Wednesday Psalm 19:7-14

and finally

I've come to an important place in my Doctor of Ministry program. It may not be that I'm quite in the homestretch yet, but at least I'm somewhere in the final curve and know that the homestretch is getting close! Because what I am now focusing on is the final element of my Doctor of Ministry program, which is the Thesis Project. Doctor of Ministry programs are designed to be carried out with the participants serving in ministry settings, with all of the course learning done in dialogue with one's ministry context and applied to one's practice of ministry. As I've progressed through my studies at McCormick, I've been giving you some updates on the coursework I've been doing, and I've connected that to the ministry of Hope Church in various ways. This is even more specifically the case for the Thesis Project, as my challenge is to design a project that explores issues that I think are important in the contemporary church and in the particular setting of Hope Church. The Thesis Project is meant to combine academic and theological depth with the applied practice of ministry, with the purpose of serving both one's specific ministry setting and also offering insights and resources to the broader Church.

One of the interests that I carried into my DMin studies and that has continued to be percolating in me throughout this time, is my appreciation over the past decade for the work of two contemporary theologians, René Girard and James Alison. These theologians have offered an understanding of atonement – God's saving work in Christ – that has for me opened up Scripture and brought insight and energy to my faith. I've been interested in finding ways to draw on the themes I've found in Girard and Alison, and creatively weave those into the worship and educational life of Hope Church, believing that to do so would be a way of supporting and encouraging the ministry of Hope Church and the faith of its members. As I've progressed through my DMin program, I've had the chance to consider various ways of carrying out such a project, consulting with folks within and beyond Hope Church, and I'm now at the point of designing and implementing some of those ideas.

So, what does that look like? Well, I have some specifics developed, and some things still to be worked out, so I can both sketch out a general overview for you and also ask you to stay tuned! My Thesis Project has three areas of ministry I will focus on, as I develop materials for Children in Worship, for Youth Ministry, and for the liturgy for worship services. With the Youth Ministry, I have designed materials for a retreat in January. With Children in Worship, I am writing a story to be used in the worship centers, and I will also be holding a workshop with parents to explore some of their ideas and wonderings about talking about faith with their

children (scheduled for Sunday, February 25 - watch for details soon for that). With our worship services, I will focus in particular on the Prayer of Confession, writing prayers to be used in the liturgy. With all of these aspects of the project, there are some values that guide how these ideas are developed and carried out: this is a collaborative process, as I draw on the gifts of my colleagues and congregation for developing this project; this is an appreciative process, as I am seeking to support and nurture Hope Church in its expression of faith and service; this is an evocative and creative process, as the various parts of the project are meant to make and explore faith connections as they are carried out.

And finally, and most importantly, this is a participatory process, which means you participating! In the areas of the youth and children's programs, I'll be asking for feedback from leaders in those activities, but I'm also going to be offering a general invitation to the congregation to engage specifically with the "prayers" aspect of the project. I am still working out the details, but please watch for information this Spring and/or Fall about workshops to offer some responses to the materials I've developed. All will be invited, and your participation and feedback will be a part of the wisdom I am able to incorporate into my Thesis Project.

That's the plan for the Thesis Project! In terms of timing, I'll be carrying out the project and writing the thesis over this 2018 year, with a draft of the thesis due towards the end of the year. When my Thesis Project is submitted to McCormick, I will be asked to do a defense of the thesis at McCormick in early 2019, and then, if all goes well, I will complete the DMin program with graduation in May of 2019. So, as I said, it's not quite the homestretch yet, but I know it's just around the corner. I look forward to working with Hope Church in the coming months to carry out this project, and I trust it will be a benefit to the people and ministry of Hope Church.

I'm so grateful to be able to serve as a pastor among you, and I sincerely thank you for supporting me in my Doctor of Ministry studies!

Peace,
Pastor Gordon



Hope Church News

February 2018



March, April & May Greeters

The Outreach & Hospitality Ministry

The following list reflects the households assigned to greet for the next three months (**Please note: the schedule for the entire year is also now posted** on a "Greeter Schedule" poster in the gathering area)

March Greeters

04 Tom & Judy Bultman
11 Suzanne Buteyn
18 Art & Mary Buys
25 Kurt & Sharon Hopkins

April Greeters

01 David & Janice Chase
08 QiaoQiao Chen & Grace Miguel
Cipriano
15 JoAnne Brooks & Ruth Donaldson
22 Kristen Hintz
29 Peter & Carole Hintz

May Greeters

06 Rich & Marilyn Cook
13 Hank Telgenhof & Ruth Hoekstra-
Telgenhof
20 Paul & Michelle Heusinkveld
27 Joe & Allison Davelaar

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. If you prefer to have a member of the Outreach and Hospitality Ministry assign a substitute greeter, contact the office. ***If you are willing to volunteer as a substitute greeter or greet more often than once a year, please contact the office.***

February 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym) <div>Restorative Circle Facilitator Training Feb. 1-2, 9 am -4 pm</div>	2	3
4 Season of Reconciliation 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Beth Carroll</i> 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>Communion</i> <i>Gordon Wiersma, preaching</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 3 pm Organ Recital 6 pm Fish Club Tank Time	5 5 pm Executive Committee 6:15 pm Stewardship & Finance 7 pm Community	6	7 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 9:30 am Circle 1 6 pm Joint Youth Sunday Prep 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 7 pm Chancel Choir	8 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	9	10
11 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>QlaoQiao Chen</i> 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>Youth Sunday</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 6 pm Joint Youth Event	12 11 am REST Support Group 7 pm Consistory	13 10:30 am Coffee at Appeldorn 5:30 pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	14 Ash Wednesday 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 7:35 am Discerning our Future 6 pm Ash Wednesday Dinner 7 pm Ash Wednesday Service 7:45 pm Circle 4	15 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	16	17
18 First Sunday of Lent 8:30 am Early Worship 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am High Hopes Unshowered 9:40 am Chancel Choir 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Gordon Wiersma, preaching</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 11:15 am 6th & 7th Grade Sunday School 12:15 pm Blood Pressure Clinic	19 4 pm Outreach & Hospitality 6:45 pm Congregational Care 7:30 pm Reconciliation	20 12 pm Early Worship Task Force	21 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 12 pm Building & Grounds 1 pm Readers 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 7 pm Chancel Choir 7:15 pm Lent Series at Grace Episcopal	22 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 6 pm Brim Bunch 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	23	24
25 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 & 7th Grade Sunday School 12:15 pm Pizza Sunday 12:30 pm Caring for Creation 12:30 pm Parents' CIW Workshop 6 pm High Hopes Unplugged	26 11 am REST Support Group 6:30 pm Christian Education 7:00 pm Worship, Prayer & Spirituality 7:15 pm Personnel	27 7 pm Leadership Meeting 7 pm Piano Concert	28 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 7:15 pm Lent Series at Grace Episcopal			



THE 2018 CARE WELL CHALLENGE

FEBRUARY



**"YOU CANNOT DO A KINDNESS TOO SOON, FOR YOU NEVER
KNOW HOW SOON IT WILL BE TOO LATE."**

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

				1	2	3
4 Cook the family's favorite meal.	5 Tell your spouse three things you like about him/her.	6	7 Tell someone, "I'm sorry."	8 Pray for a person who is difficult.	9	10 Stop nagging and let go of the little things.
11 Cook the family's favorite meal.	12 Tell your spouse three things you like about him/her.	13 Ask, "How may I help you" as many times as possible today.	14 Buy your spouse flowers.	15 Pray for a person who is difficult.	16 Forgive someone.	17 Put a chocolate candy on someone's pillow.
18 Discover two nice things about a difficult person.	19	20 Give someone a hug today.	21	22 Surprise a friend or a spouse with their favorite meal.	23 Call someone you haven't talked to recently and tell them that you love them.	24
25 Make a list of ways that you can bless your spouse.	26 Tuck a "Remember when we..." note into your spouse's purse, billfold, or book.	27	28 Write a love letter and mail it.	Worry weighs a person down; an encouraging word cheers a person up. Proverbs 12:25		

Visit WISDOMoftheWOUNDED.com/care-well-challenge
for calendar updates and downloads.

Be kind and
compassionate
to one another,
forgiving each
other, just as
in Christ God
forgave you.
Ephesians 4:32