



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 62, No. 3

March 2019

In This Issue

Healing Prayer.....	2
Easter Lily Sale.....	2
Adult Education	2
Witnesses to	
Reconciliation	3-4
Caring for Creation.....	5
Kids Hope.....	5-6
Youth Ministry	6
Poetry Corner	7
Events &	
Announcements	8
Witness to	
Reconciliation	9
Congregational Care	10
Lectionary	10
And Finally.....	11

Inserts:

- Think Hope Donation Form
- March Calendar

The deadline for the April newsletter is **Friday, March 15.**

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



Mardi Gras Celebration/Shrove Tuesday March 5

Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director

Come and join in the fun for all ages. Mardi Gras celebrations are traditionally a time of last chance merrymaking before the disciplines of Lent. On Tuesday, March 5th from 6-7:30pm everyone (of all ages) is invited to come enjoy a pancake dinner and to participate in some fun activities including a parade with bead necklaces, noise makers, masks and games for all. The pancakes can be piled high with toppings, the music can be invigorating and the activities boisterous but there will also be a time for reflection as we prepare for the season of Lent. Everyone is invited to spend this time together in fellowship. Please sign up in the Gathering Area or on the second floor landing 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!

Lent 2019: Identity

During the Lenten season the following themes of IDENTITY will be explored through preaching and liturgy:

March 10 – Lent I: *ROOTED ~ Communion will be shared*

March 17 – Lent II: *VULNERABLE*

March 24 – Lent III: *CHOSEN ~ Communion will be shared & Healing Prayers offered*

March 31 – Lent IV: *KNOWN*

April 7 – Lent V: *FOUND ~ Communion will be shared*

Ash Wednesday Service

Ash Wednesday, March 6

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 attend! You can also sign up to help with set up and clean up. Set up starts at 4 p.m.*

Wednesday Evening Lenten Worship Services

March 13, 20, 27 ~ 7:00pm

For these services we will be joining with our First United Methodist Neighbors for worship; please watch for announcements on location week to week. The services will be a contemplative time of evening prayer, combining music, scripture and prayer. We will be using resources from the Iona Community to enrich our worship. All are invited to attend.

Healing Prayer Service: March 24

Sunday, March 24

11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

There will be a healing prayer service as part of our 11:00 AM Worship Service on Sunday, March 24. The liturgy at the 11am service will focus on the need for healing from God in our lives, in the lives of those we love, and in our world. During the service, there will be the opportunity for the congregation to offer prayers for healing and to receive a blessing of healing oil as a symbol of God's healing touch. If you are unable to attend and would like a particular prayer for healing to be included, please contact one of the pastors or the church office to let your prayer request be known.

Easter Lily Sale

Once again, Hope Church is pleased to offer its annual Easter Lily Sale! We are providing lovely white lilies, greenhouse quality, at a fraction of the price. The lilies will be \$12.50 each. Lilies that have been ordered will be used to decorate our sanctuary on Easter Sunday, and after the 11:00 am service may be brought home, serve as a hostess gift, or be delivered to homebound members. These lilies may also be planted in your garden as an Easter memory for the future.

Order forms will be on the last page of the bulletin to tear out on March 24, 31, and April 7. You can also pick up an order form from the church office.

Orders must be turned in to the office by Sunday, April 7. Pick up will be after 11:00 am worship on Sunday, April 21. There will be a bulletin listing of loved ones' names that lilies are in honor or memory of.

Adult Education: March

Classes meet in Commons I on Sundays from 9:40 to 10:45am. They are free and are open to young people and adults.

March 3: Jim Brownson, James and Jean Cook Professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary, will teach about what the "Catechism on Marriage and Sexuality," developed by the Regional Synod of the Great Lakes, includes and does not include. With some reservations expressed at General Synod 2018 about releasing this document before its being studied by the Commission on Theology, the body voted to "commend the Great Lakes Catechism on Marriage and Sexuality for reflection, study, and response by the Commission on Theology and RCA churches and classes as a means of deepening our understanding of the biblical teaching on human sexuality and finding a pathway forward toward unity in mission and ministry." The seven-page "Great Lakes Catechism on Marriage Sexuality" can be downloaded at <http://images.rca.org/docs/synod/GLCatechism.pdf>

March 10: Dr. Paolo Naso works with the Waldensian Church in Italy around issues of immigration and justice. He is also the coordinator of an interdenominational partnership called "Being Church Together" and is an RCA mission partner. You can learn more about Paolo's ministry at www.rca.org/paolo-naso and at Mediterranean Hope.

March 17: Housing Issues in Ottawa County – Ryan Kilpatrick, Executive Director of "Housing Next", will offer his perspective on the challenges and opportunities for affordable housing in our community. Housing Next is a local organization that partners with public and private organizations to identify opportunities to increase the supply of housing at all price points and execute high quality projects. Kilpatrick has an extensive background in community planning, development finance, and public engagement.

March 24: Cultural Agility - Earl James works for the RCA as the Coordinator for African American/Black Council and Advocacy. The African American Black Council (AABC) of the Reformed Church in America exists to help the RCA face and address issues related to race and ethnicity. Earl equips RCA leaders and congregations in becoming more culturally agile.

March 31: Hope Church Disability Housing Task Force – the DHTF will present the background and progress it is making in addressing housing needs for adults with disabilities, responding to needs within and beyond our congregation. The DHTF has developed a vision which addresses these needs within the broader context of affordable housing, and the Consistory has affirmed the pursuit of this vision. Background materials for the March 31 presentation will be shared with the congregation in March in advance of the session.

Witness to Reconciliation: Reconciliation in Health Care

Rev. Cindi Veldheer DeYoung, Hospital Chaplain

I stood outside of a patient's room on one of our intensive care units, talking with the nurse, as we both waited for more of the patient's family to arrive. The family had asked that a chaplain pray with them before the staff withdraws life support. We expected that the patient would die soon.

The nurse said to me, "If something devastating happens to me. I'd want to quit. I am not a fighter." I think she's describing "surrender" more than quit, I said to her. We both have heard many times how family members describe patients as "fighters."

Most of us who work in the intensive care unit see how families agonize over decision-making. When devastating injury or a terrible prognosis is given to patients or family members, very few people would not choose "full speed ahead" for the course of treatment. We understand that family members are in shock. They want what they had: a vibrant, dear person who had plans for tomorrow and next week. They want continued hopes and a future.

Those of us who work in intensive care units wish we could protect families from future pain of prolonged illness or deficits. We want to warn against what fighting might mean. We wish the general public had a better grasp of how very difficult (not to mention costly) it can be to "do everything." It is not a matter of wanting to change

minds, but we hold an aching desire for them to know some of what lies ahead.

Fighting, or continuing to "do everything" seems to be the valiant course, whereas surrendering may seem like giving up, or quitting. Sometimes, of course, it's a matter of quickly doing something to save a life. I wonder if we could view these actions as a process, rather than as opposite choices.

When 2 Corinthians uses a phrase that refers to God "reconciling the world to himself," I think of coming to terms with an awful diagnosis, or a devastating injury, as a process of reconciliation. How do we make sense of difficult, devastating news and also respond quite immediately to options of treatment, plans of care, and other courses of action? The process is very compressed when news is given to people in shock. No wonder it seems "either, or," as in, "fight," or "quit."

In this particular case that the nurse and I faced the other day, the patient had experienced significant, long-term illness. The family was clearly ready to let go. I don't know what they were like at the beginning of this illness. We do know—we could see—that they were weary, and were ready to let go.

When God is reconciling the world to

himself, it sounds sacred and holy. Our efforts to come to terms with grief, or limitations, are messy, profane, painful, gut-wrenching, and awful. How do we know how much to fight or surrender, especially on behalf of someone else?

We have occasions to come to terms with our limits throughout life; we might not want to accommodate our worsening hearing, or honestly evaluate our abilities. We don't want not to treat a cancer that threatens our health. Then, something happens to remind us to adjust, yet again. Is there grace in accepting such changes?

Can faith that God bestows on us hold us so securely that we don't have to be the ones holding on for dear life? I hope we can rest in the faith God gives. I hope we see it is not about fighting, but rather, discerning, somehow integrating truth and hope, faith and love, again, and again. Facing terrible news, or even difficult realities, means coming to terms with ourselves. Can we reconcile the bad news of illness or limits with new ways to hope that God will carry us through, in life and in death? We belong to God, the catechism says. We are not our own, but belong, body and soul, in life and in death, to our faithful Savior—the same savior who makes possible the reconciling process that God is enacting.

Witness to Reconciliation: Reflections on Reconciliation

Larry Dickie, Clerk, Holland Friends Meeting

Hope Church News says you'll be hearing from Hope Church members. So a word of caution. While I was a member years ago I'll be talking about becoming an ex-member and a Quaker. Quakers are one of several historic Peace churches.

Their Peace Testimony is a modern

interpretation of what originally was the Testimony of Harmony which for me speaks to a broader understanding not only of peace but of peacemaking. Coincidentally, if you tap "define" or "look up" for reconciliation on your device you'll find among the definitions "Harmonizing." This suggests to me that reconciliation like

peacemaking can be seen as a process rather than a final destination to which one arrives—planned or unplanned and helps me as I try to find harmony in an ever changing world.

I've been a carpenter for many years so I think fondly of my life in Hope Church as a time of assembling a tool kit.

continued on page 4

HOPE CHURCH NEWS

continued from page 3

Though I understand the theme this year is “provisions for the journey.” That works too.

In my early days Marlin, among his many gifts, led an in-depth Bible study. From Paul Fries many of us learned meditation practices. I helped lead Early Worship with Dennis and Ruth and others—developing and enjoying alternative ways to worship. For many years I joined Elsie Lamb, JoAnne Brooks, Dave DeBlock and other Holland Peacemakers meeting in The Garden Lounge. Following The Church of the Savior model, we practiced an “inward and outward journey.” Beginning meetings with guided meditation—trusting that our outward activism would be spirit rather than ego led.

With Marty there was the Spirituality Ministry. We explored the many ways people of Christian and other persuasions experience the divine. Importantly, she also taught some of us ways of centering prayer.

Underlying all of this activity and learning I was aware of two things—One, that I needed more quiet—more introspection and two, that what I was really seeking was to overcome doubt — that somehow out of all this information and practice some unshakable Truth would emerge. For some reason it eluded me. There always seemed to be more questions than answers.

But at least I had this collection of resources—provisions, as it were—when we went off to South Africa for Jane’s sabbatical in 1988 (a whole other story.) But a formative event for me (and this was during apartheid) was connecting with St. Mary’s Primary School — a little Catholic school in Nyanga Township on the outskirts of Capetown.

The South African Catholic Church had refused to allow their schools to be
4 subsumed under the grossly unequal

apartheid education system. The Irish nuns who ran the school were subversive. They lived at the school defying the law requiring them to live in the white area. Their mimeograph machine was used to print more than worksheets—again too long a story. There were armed soldiers posted throughout the townships including just outside the school fence where the children played at recess. Whites, like myself, in black areas, especially if unknown, were viewed with suspicion and often malice by all sides. Everyone felt the pressure of constant surveillance by the authorities.

So going into the township to teach and to eventually be involved in resistance efforts at the school and beyond carried some risk and a sense of fear especially in the early days.

Once Jane was off to the university I would prepare myself for the day ahead. And the tool I found to calm the churning in my head and the pit of my stomach was centering silent meditation. What evolved, though I didn’t have a name for it then, was what Quakers name “that of God” in me and in everyone. I found a confidence that whatever the day held it would be okay. Not that I would be fearless or perform perfectly or heroically—but an acceptance that the path I was on was the right path for me at that moment. And it opened the door for much of what enveloped us for that year.

That practice has grown over time and I’ve come to understand that while I still have doubts and still seek the intellectual clarity and assurance that we humans seem to crave—it provides a deeper “heart” sense of being held by “that of God” without the need of form or name.

During that time, however, Quakers were still not on my radar except that one member of our resistance group was a Quaker who brought us to “Peace House,” near the Capetown waterfront—a house run by Quakers and used to reunite men being released

from Roben Island Prison with their families and to give them a place to stay until they could figure out what to do next. An eye opening experience. And an early affirming glimpse of Quaker life.

Sometime between then and our second trip to South Africa I became aware of a small Quaker Worship Group in Holland so after a Sunday of active worship here at Hope, I would join them in the evening for an hour of silent worship. It was there within and beyond the quiet, I began to experience the power and mystery of “gathered silent worship” with a group of capital “F” Friends.

By the next time we were in South Africa in 1996-97 apartheid had collapsed and Mandela was president. Our worship community was the Quaker Meeting in Capetown and I was able to join in the work of their Peace Center focused on reconciliation issues in the townships and including attending several sessions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There in Meeting for Worship and in the community outreach my connection with the Religious Society of Friends was becoming fully formed.

In 2000 our informal Holland Worship Group became a Preparative Meeting which was the next step to becoming an official Monthly Meeting in the Religious Society of Friends. I was asked to be Clerk so it was time to send my resignation on to Pastor Kathy Davelaar with much gratitude for the part of my journey that was Hope Church. Within a couple years we became Holland Friends Meeting and I am again serving as Clerk of our meeting.

In five minutes much is left out but let me return to the notion of reconciliation as an ongoing process and encourage you to reflect on the provisions you’ve been given and how they’ve nourished and continue to nourish your inward and outward reconciling journey.

Caring for Creation: And We Won't Come Back 'til It's Over—Over There

Peter Boogaart, Caring for Creation Co-coordinator

Most of you are too young, you aren't going to get this title. So, let me explain. The words are a lyric from the World War I song "Over There" by George M. Cohan. "Over There" is a really peppy, flag-waving, nationalistic marching song. But, that's not why I'm using it. What caught my ear was the undertone that Cohan suppressed—There's a world defining battle going on; it's going to be costly, interminable, and of uncertain outcome. To my ear, that sounds like a frame for the climate change debate. What follows are my thoughts.

Katherine Hayhoe, the Youtube host of *Global Weirding*, is a climate scientist, professor at Texas Tech, and evangelical Christian. For many people, she is the go-to authority on climate change. Her scientific expertise notwithstanding, she reduces the threat to a simple synopsis: **It's real – It's us – It's bad – It's getting worse – Our actions do make a difference – Start now.**

If you find yourself being nostalgic for a good old-fashioned case of

depression, consider a study of climate change. Why? Let me count the ways: Glacial ice is being exhausted at an unexpectedly rapid rate and billions of people depend on glacial melt for their daily needs. Sea level rise is threatening coastal cities. Oceans are absorbing 93% of global heat gain and the oceanic ecosystem is collapsing. The five hottest years on record are the last five. Pollinating insects are disappearing. Expect unnaturally intense rain fall—which leads to accelerated soil erosion—which leads to crop failure. The global rate of erosion suggests that there may be only enough top soil left for 30-70 years of production. And we haven't even begun to discuss mass migration as island states and coastal areas disappear.

Still, against this background, Hayhoe says our actions will make a difference. We need to reduce our consumption and travel, revamp land use patterns, modernize buildings, and minimize the use of energy resources. Woven through all this is a plea for social justice.

The United States, with less than 5% of world population, uses 25% of world energy; and the worst effects of climate change fall on the poorest peoples. So, is Hayhoe naive? Can our actions really make a difference? Should we listen to someone like this? I feel like Abraham, called to leave the familiar for a land I know not.

Abraham, of course, did answer the call and it was counted to him as faith. His actions did set in motion the great divine arc of restoration and salvation. I'm going to suggest that faith for us is no different than faith for Abraham. We too are called to move toward a future we can not see and may never experience. We too are being called to let go of the familiar things that entangle and to move toward the good future that God intends. Our actions can set in motion the renewing arc of restoration for all of creation.

So, start now.

Kids Hope

Vicki Rumpsa, Kids Hope USA Director

March is here! Of course that still means we are experiencing the "lion" type of weather and very much looking forward to the "lamb" type of winter that we have at the end of the month. For me, as the director of Kids Hope, I think of March as a "Mentor Appreciation Month" (since I am known as one who uses the letters of the week to guide my daily activities, it makes sense to me to use the letter "m" of March and carry that out to focus on my mentors. A bit crazy you may think but it helps me organize my life). So that is the theme of this article.

First, my mentors are amazing! I am overwhelmed at times just thinking of how wonderful they really are. These are busy people who take time out of

their schedules to be a mentor. Some leave work to do so. Others schedule their mentoring time early in the morning before work. Many others do other volunteer work but still find time for Kids Hope. Some have done this for years and a few have left the program and come back when they heard that there was a need for more mentors. Even though this group of 11 is great, I always am looking for new mentors as new kids arrive at school mid year and teachers continue to ask for mentors for them. Next school year I would like to at least add 5 new mentors so if you are reading this article, please be thinking about that.

So what does being a mentor involve? Well, first of all if you are interested

in possibly being a mentor you either contact me or sign up on the sheet that is located on the Kids Hope Bulletin Board (didn't know there was a Kids Hope Bulletin board? You'll find it on the board nearest the office). By signing up or speaking with me you are just saying you want to know more what being a mentor entails and no commitment is made at that time. If you are interested I will contact you and answer any questions you have. If you then want to pursue being a mentor, I will give you a volunteer sheet to fill out. Once that is returned to me, the office runs a background check (Kids Hope requires this). Then the training begins. You have the choice of how you want to receive the Kids Hope Training with one option being meeting with me in

continued on page 6

continued from page 5

person for 2 hours and the other option being doing online training at your own convenience. Once the training is completed we will meet again to answer any further questions you have and to give you your Kids Hope folder. The Kids Hope folder includes such things as the Vanderbilt Academy's school calendar, information on the student you are being assigned to and the contact email for your student's teacher so that you can speak with him or her and decide the day and time you will mentor. Once this is set I will meet you at the school to give you a tour, introduce you to the office staff, show you locations you can find a desk to mentor at, locate the student's room and visit our Kids Hope room where we keep our books, games and

arts and crafts material. You are now ready to begin mentoring. Mentoring time is spent getting acquainted, talking about what has happened in the past week, some help with homework, reading together and playing a game. The key to this time is relationship building. These kids can benefit from more attention than a crowded classroom can often give, so this 1 on 1 time with you is really important. You will find that they can't wait for your visits and a special bond is created over the school year as you meet together. Once your 45 minute session is completed you are asked to fill out a Progress Report that comes ready to use with 2 copies. You take a few minutes to fill this out and put one copy in the teacher's box and one

in the Kids Hope box and then you are on your way to your next place to be.

Throughout the year you are asked to attend with your student 1 or 2 special events like bowling and we all gather at the end of the year with the Third Reformed Church mentors at a Year End Celebration that includes dinner and awards. The reward of mentoring is making a difference in the life of a child. As one mentor put it "I can't think of a better 45 minutes spent knowing that I am helping a child."

So do you want to be a mentor? You know what to do now and I look forward to answering any questions you have.

Youth Ministry

Beth Carroll, Assistant Pastor of Discipleship

In January, Elder Barbara Knoops and I spent 2 days at the RCA offices in Grand Rapids steeped in understanding more deeply the experiences of being a youth and young adult in today's culture. The Growing Young Cohort is a fantastic resource the RCA is providing to help churches become more intergenerational and Barb and I walked away from the first summit feeling energized and filled with ideas. Hope Church has committed to becoming a "Growing Young Church", which means over the next 2 years we will commit to identifying and addressing our strengths and weaknesses in our discipleship of youth and emerging adults and prioritize their needs, alongside the needs of the rest of our adults. Many of you have heard me talk about this exciting cohort and we are thrilled to have finally begun! Rather than being another programmatic element for all of us to add to our schedules and tasks, the Growing Young Cohort is a cultural shift, prioritizing listening to the needs of young people and older adults alike and encouraging our church body to discover ways we

can draw all people together. There are 6 core commitments in becoming a Growing Young Church; that is these are the 6 hallmarks of churches that have a vibrant and age-diverse community.

1. Unlock Key Chain Leadership - Instead of centralizing authority to just a few people, empower others in the church to lead, especially young people.
2. Empathy Today- Instead of judging or criticizing young people, step into the shoes of this generation and wonder what life is like for them in today's culture.
3. Jesus's Message- Instead of asserting formulaic gospel claims, empower young people to live in Christ, both within our church walls, but especially in our world.
4. Warm Relationships - Instead of focusing only on worship or programs for discipleship, aim for warm peer and intergenerational friendships.
5. Prioritize Everywhere- Don't just tell young people they matter, look for creative ways to

tangibly support, resource, and involve them in all facets of our congregational life.

6. Be the Best Neighbors - Enable young people to neighbor well locally and globally. Demonstrate that life in Christ means loving God and our neighbors as ourselves.

You might recognize that some of these commitments we are already doing well and a few that are opportunities for more growth. You will be hearing more about this in the coming months, including participating in a church wide survey that gauges the experiences and commitment of younger and older adults. If any of this sounds intriguing to you, consider joining our core leadership team! Barbara and I are looking for folks to assist with listening to the needs of church members and imagining what a Growing Young church could look like for our congregation. This is a low time commitment activity and if you are interested in helping, please contact Pastor Beth.

Poetry Corner

hosted by Randy Smit and Rhonda Edgington

A friend to many at Hope Church and Hope College, our friend Jack Ridl offers a few poems and reflections this month. Along with the wisdom of his mentor William Stafford, what follows blesses and teaches and welcomes us all to a new way to be in prayer. (Enjoy the potato pancakes :-)) ~Randy

About my poem: For a time I brooded about the Biblical injunction to pray without ceasing. I mean, how do you do that? There are snacks to be enjoyed, bills to pay, ice to chip off the steps, some movie a friend said, "You Have to see this one!", sermons to listen to. I mean c'mon! So as I usually do, I put on my zen lenses, thought about what William Stafford had shown me, and there it was--live within prayer, live prayer-fully, live prayer-like.

About coupling my poem with William Stafford's "Ask Me"? Stafford showed me in person and in his work another way toward peace, into alternative consciousness, how to brave different but not combative perceptions. For example, in my poem the word "sins" appears. Today I think about taking it out. It's presumptuous, arrogant for me to think I know what "sins" are. At least I leave it up to the birds to decide, to "twitch" for them, if there are such.

After Reading Dom John Chapman, Benedictine Abbot

"Pray as you can; not as you can't."
My prayers will sit on the backs
of bedraggled donkeys, in the sidecars
of Harleys, in the pockets of night
watchmen, on the laps of widows.
They will be the stones I walk by,
the smudges I leave on anything I touch,
the last place the last snow melts. They
will be brown, weekdays, potato pancakes.
They will stick to the undersides of porches,
docks, dog paws, and carpets. When I'm sick,
my cough will carry them. When you leave
in the morning, they will sink into the bed,
the sofa, every towel. I will carry them
in the modesty of my feet. Everything
will be praying: My dog will be petitioning
for mercy when he stops to sniff a post.
Every window in our house will be
an offering for supplication. The birds
at the feeder will be twitching
for my sins. I will say my prayers
are bread dough, doorknobs, golf tees,
any small and nameless change of heart.
When I forget my prayers, they will
bundle up and go out on their own
across the street, down into the basement,
into a small town with no mayor where
there is a single swing in the park. When

Stafford uses the word "mistakes"-- ". . . ask me mistakes I've made." And we rightly assume that he will tell us later on in the poem. In an interview, when asked what he thought sin is, he said he wouldn't presume to know, that he couldn't know. If he did presume to know, he would judge in a way that was a form of violence. And so he lets the river answer for him. And note his condition: "When the river is ice." He's not suggesting that the river does not speak, but that it does. By asking the questioner to turn to the river he deflects a possible conflict, and offers an opportunity to learn from the river, that "What the river says, that is what I say."

William Stafford was a member of The Church of the Brethren. Jack Ridl is a member of the Douglas Congregational Church of Christ.

~Jack Ridl

I forget, they'll know I was watching TV,
the sky, or listening to Basie, remembering
the way my mother and father jitterbugged
to the big band station, he pulling her close,
then spinning her out across the green kitchen floor.

—Jack Ridl

from Broken Symmetry (Wayne State University Press)

Ask Me

Some time when the river is ice ask me
mistakes I have made. Ask me whether
what I have done is my life. Others
have come in their slow way into
my thought, and some have tried to help
or to hurt: ask me what difference
their strongest love or hate has made.

I will listen to what you say.
You and I can turn and look
at the silent river and wait. We know
the current is there, hidden; and there
are comings and goings from miles away
that hold the stillness exactly before us.
What the river says, that is what I say.

~William Stafford

Copyrighted in the name of the poet. Used for educational purposes.

Events and Announcements

Orientation to Hope Church Class:

On Sunday, March 3, at 9:40 a.m., an Orientation to Hope Church Class continues for people wanting to learn more about Hope Church. The class will meet two more Sunday mornings, March 3, and March 17 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 8 at 6:30 pm. A public reception of new members will take place during 11:00 a.m. worship on April 14. 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.

Women's Circle Meetings

Circle 1 will meet on Wednesday, March 6, 9:30 a.m. at Hope Church in the youth room.

Circle 2 will meet in Commons 2 on Wednesday, March 6 at 9:30 am.

Circle 4 will meet on Wednesday, March 13 at 7 pm.

Daylight Savings: March 10

Daylight savings begins at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 10. Remember to turn your clocks forward an hour!

Coffee Time at Appledorn South

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 South on Tuesday, March 12, 2019 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, March 20th, at 1:00pm in Commons 2. We will be discussing the book, *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* by Sabastian Junger. Our discussion leader will be Kay Hubbard, and our hostesses will be Karmen Kooyers and Rhonda Edgington. Come and share your love of books with us! New members are always welcome! For more information contact Lauren Heyboer.

Spring Garden-Clean Up

Gardeners! A clean-up extravaganza is planned for **Saturday, March 23 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.

March Pizza Sunday

The next Pizza Sunday is scheduled for **Sunday, March 24** (note that it is NOT the last Sunday of the month as usual, due to spring break).

Special ACEH Event Coming Up

SAVE THE DATE! ACEH will hold its 20th anniversary celebration "March into the Future" on Saturday, March 16, from 5 pm to 8:30 pm at First United Methodist Church, 57 West 10th St in Holland. Entertainment, silent auction of goods and services, family activities, delicious foods, and warm fellowship at this Cultural Sharing Party and Potluck! Everyone is welcome. The auction is always popular with people who come to our community potlucks; it's a way for local businesses and organizations to both support our work for a welcoming community and to receive recognition for their goods and services. Could you donate gift cards, event tickets, certificates for classes, or a product that you create by hand or manufacture? Are you a good cook who could host a small brunch, lunch, or dinner-especially one with foods from your own culture? Other ideas? Please call 396-2201 or email editann@aol.com and let's talk about it!

Sign Up for Email Giving Statements

Opt in to receive your Hope Church giving statements by email instead of by mail! All you need to do is fill out the online form with your name and the email address you'd like the statements emailed to by going online to: <https://tinyurl.com/emailgiving>.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

05	Nancy VandeWater	17	Bette Williams
05	Marjorie French		
06	Barbara Bingham		
10	JoAnne Brooks		
14	Terry VandeWater		
16	Duncan McCune		

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@hopechurchrca.org

Witness to Reconciliation

March 2019

Pat Bloem & Persisterhood Choir

Reconciliation, as I understand it, is the end of estrangement between God and humanity, or between one person and another, or one set of people and another. Is Persisterhood Choir part of a reconciliation effort?

I'm not sure. But we hope so. We came into being because of estrangement, and since our inception we've reflected on injustices and others' estrangements and hope that our songs make the world a better place.

As members of Hope Church know well, we live in a broken world.

It felt very broken in the Fall of 2016.

- There was an absence of civil discourse.
- There were lies.
- We saw violence in schools and churches.
- And we heard ugly, demeaning talk about women from men in positions of authority, men who were being listened to and admired.

We knew the roots--

(CHOIR--murmur ME TOO- ME TOO -ME TOO from very soft to mezzo forte)

—many of you women in the congregation did too--of what would later become the Me Too movement.

We went to Washington, many of us. On very uncomfortable buses that drove all through the night and then returned the next.

But the whole time we were shivering there on crowded streets—some of us having NEVER done a protest before—we were thinking

ANN—This little light

Kath—This little light *of mine*

Mary—I'm going to let it shine

Katie—I'm going to let it shine

Which we did, and it was amazing. But

how to keep that shine going?

There was a song—new song that became the unofficial song of the women's march, and it was called

ALL say—I CAN'T KEEP QUIET

And some of us wanted to sing it. So Jen arranged it for us, and we started to sing with each other, that song, and other songs like it.

We sang a song that Jen and Brad had brought back with them from South Africa called Siyahamba, We are marching in the Light of God.

And when we sang that, one of us called out, We are marching

Ann--For no guns in school!

And we talked about how we can make a difference to the violence in our country, and we sang, We are marching

Kath--For the Youth who Lead

And we would thank God that we weren't alone. Other people too were grieving over this broken and bitter world, and doing something about it.

There is a proud tradition of singing for social justice, going back to the suffragettes, and other activists.

Mary: Gentle, ANGRY people, who sang for their lives

So after our rehearsals, we would talk with each other about what others were doing. Here were some of the discussions.

- Gerrymandering. We have one person in our choir who is tireless about fixing this broken part of our politics.
- 11 and 12 year old children in Grand Rapids clapped in handcuffs, by mistake. Neighbors. Kids. Their mother cried and cried about their trauma. Of course, black lives matter, and yes, These are OUR

children, from our community.

- Families separated at the border. We have many moms and grammas and aunts and nieces and teachers in this choir who can't imagine how much fear that must entail.
- Our physical world-- Flint! The Nestle Corporation taking our water.
- LGBT kids—in this community-- who contemplate suicide.

These are wrongs, worries, evidence of brokenness. But we've found solace and direction in singing out the idea that we

Mary and Katie and Kath: Stand, shoulder to shoulder

So we keep movin' on.

Of course we know that some people think this is silly, or deluded, that this little choir could possibly make a difference or make the world a better place.

But the songs keep bubbling up, inside of us.

Katie: I. Will. Rise. Up!

And in the end, the worry that we aren't really doing anything, isn't that the same worry or criticism about our own individual lives? That we can't do much to make this world better?

And is that a reason not to try?

And could it be,

Ann: that the dawn draws near?

PAUSE

Kath: and the world is about to turn?

While we can, before we die, we are here to testify.

(One after the other)

Mary—to testify!

Katie—to testify!

Ann—to testify!

Kath—to testify!

Congregational Care & Health Ministry: How to Get the Most Out of Your Medical Care

Ginger Clark, R.N., Hope Church Nurse

How well you and your doctor talk to each other is one of the most important parts of getting good health care. You and your doctor can work as a team along with nurses, physician assistants and pharmacists. Choose a doctor that you are comfortable talking with and one that will listen to your concerns. Are the doctor's explanations clear enough for you and your family to understand? Is your insurance accepted and does the doctor's office work well with your plan?

Here are some tips to make it easier to get the most out of an appointment.

1. Make a list of what you want to discuss. Prioritize them, as many times they will only cover one or two issues at one appointment.
2. Consider taking a family member or a friend. It helps to review the results of the appointment with someone else.
3. Be sure you can see and hear well when you go. Use your glasses and hearing aids.
4. Be clear and concise when describing your symptoms.

Keep a journal if it is something ongoing and share that at your appointment.

5. Take all your medications, including supplements, or a detailed list to your appointment. Know the reason for taking each one and what side effects to watch out for.
6. Describe your life habits and let the doctor know of any major changes or stresses in your life.
7. Make sure you understand any tests that are ordered and why they need to be done.
8. Take notes to help you remember. Let the team know if you do not understand something. Ask for copies of any reports review later.
9. Learn about prevention. It's never too late to prevent a chronic illness from getting worse. Discuss diet and exercise specific to your medical diagnoses.
10. Discuss sensitive subjects such as alcohol, fear of falling, grief, depression, incontinence or memory problems.

~Excerpts from NIH "Talking with your Doctor"

At Home With the Word

Sunday Lectionary as Daily Bible Readings

March 1-March 3, 2019

Friday Luke 9:28-36
Saturday Luke 9:37-43
Sunday Transfiguration Sunday

March 4-March 10, 2019

Monday Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Tuesday Psalm 91:1-2, 9-13
Wednesday Ash Wednesday; Psalm 51:1-17
Thursday Psalm 91:14-16
Friday Romans 10:8b-13
Saturday Luke 4:1-13
Sunday First Sunday in Lent

March 11-17, 2019

Monday Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Tuesday Psalm 27:1-6
Wednesday Psalm 27:7-14
Thursday Philippians 3:17-4:1
Friday Luke 13:31-35

Saturday Luke 9:28-43
Sunday Second Sunday in Lent

March 18-24, 2019

Monday Isaiah 55:1-5
Tuesday Isaiah 55:6-9
Wednesday Psalm 63:1-8
Thursday 1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Friday Luke 13:1-5
Saturday Luke 13:6-9
Sunday Third Sunday in Lent

March 25-31, 2019

Monday Joshua 5:9-12
Tuesday Psalm 32:1-5
Wednesday Psalm 32:6-11
Thursday 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Friday Luke 15:1-3, 11-24
Saturday Luke 15:25-32
Sunday Fourth Sunday in Lent

and finally

I don't think this will quite be the last time I write about my Doctor of Ministry studies, but it's getting close – which means the degree is getting close too! I'm going to tell you about my final class that I took in January, but also want to update you on how my studies are wrapping up. As I write this in mid-February, I am preparing for presenting my final Thesis project at McCormick Seminary in Chicago on February 20. This will be a time to get feedback on my Thesis from professors and peers, and then make final edits to my Thesis project. With completion of the final course and of my Thesis, I'm looking ahead to GRADUATION on Saturday, May 11! – more about that as the date gets closer. But that brings me back to my final course. Some of you might have noted through bulletin announcements in early January, that I travelled to San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) for this course, and although it was great to be able to travel west in January, it was simply all about just getting a last course done.

Now perhaps you don't really believe me that I had a bad attitude going into this course, but it truly was the case that for various reasons I was having a difficult time finding a final course to take at McCormick, and San Francisco was my only option to get my coursework done! And so it came to be that even though it would have not been my first choice, I ended up registered for a course on 'contemplative practices for courageous leadership.' Now, don't get me wrong, I respect and love many people who are in the more mystical, contemplative end of the spirituality pool – it's just that I don't like to hang out much in that part of the pool. So I was willing to go to SFTS and put in my time for this course, but I was determined that I wasn't going to enjoy it and that I wasn't going to get much out of it!

But then something happened: I enjoyed the course! I enjoyed hanging out with the mystics and contemplatives, and I even brought home some practices personally and pastorally to share. And the thing that was meaningful about the week, is that this was not a packaged 5-day how-to program on contemplative leadership. Rather it was a challenging (in a gentle, mystical way :) exploration of how one's internal life shapes one's interactions and relationships with others. Perhaps that seems obvious, but in fact in many circles including church circles, there are many "success" programs presented as packaged steps to follow. This week at SFTS offered something different, something counter-cultural. It offered the challenge to listen: to listen to my past, both the good and the difficult; to listen to my gifts and my faults; to listen to my pain and my joy; to listen to the Spirit and to Wisdom; and, perhaps most importantly, to breathe deeply.

I'm not sure if all that sounds simple or complicated or peculiar or inviting to you, but for me the week was a gift of being reminded about the life-giving need simply (profoundly) to pay attention. It is only as I pay attention more fully to what is happening in myself and to what I need to thrive, that I can then truly also pay attention to you and really listen for who you are and what you need. It is only as I pay attention to the pain and hope in me, that I can be in solidarity more deeply with the pain and joy in the world. It is only as I listen to the Spirit (and the mystics teach that listening can often be about silence), that there is a clearer way to see my own gifts and my own need for wholeness.

What also became clear to me from the SFTS week is that all of what I'm reflecting on and trying to express here has very much to do with the polarities of action & formation, outward journey & inward journey, that we have been exploring at Hope Church over the past number of months. And it reinforced in me that these interplays are vital for us to pay attention to as a community of faith in an ongoing way.

So now, reluctant contemplative convert that I am: I'm lighting a candle at the beginning of GIFT Class (for 8th and 9th graders) and taking a few moments of reflection to listen to our lives and to remember God loves us; I am determined each day to take at least one very deep breath, and it is remarkable how good that feels; I am paying attention to gratitude in the midst of both joy and challenge; I am leaning into listening more honestly to myself and to others. And I am, as always, so very grateful for your support for me throughout this Doctor of Ministry program, for the gift of the time and space to explore such things.

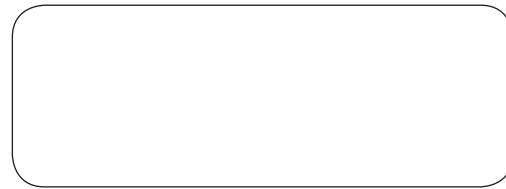
Now...take a deep breath in...and out...(doesn't that feel good?!)

Peace,
~Gordon



Hope Church News

March 2019



Mark Your Calendar for Think Hope--and Start Your Imagination Saturday, April 27, 2019, 5 to 8:30 p.m.

Community Ministry



It's time to start revving your imagination to see what you might contribute to Think Hope! Mark your calendar for Saturday evening, April 27, for this annual dinner and silent auction. We're planning to benefit

the Sprint to the Finish of our facility renovations, part of an effort to reach our financial goal before conversion to a mortgage.

Your creativity is key to the success of the auction. Start now to craft, collect, or conceive of your donations! To inspire you, past-year items that reflect the ingenuity and talents of our members have been knitted socks, hand-sewn grocery bags, original artwork, handmade jewelry, cakes and pies, ethnic or picnic dinners, boat rides, babysitting and carpentry services, and the use of vacation getaways. **A donation**

form is enclosed in this newsletter for your convenience, or you can pick one up in the church office.

Along with the auction, for which you're invited to provide both items and bids, we'll have a delicious dinner featuring grilled chicken; and entertainment will follow.

Watch for more communications about April ticket sales and logistics for delivering your contribution! And plan to join us for a celebration of our members, their gifts, and the gift that our facility is for our own congregation and our community.

March 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 7 pm Choral Singing in Prisons	2
3 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Judith Boogaart</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 9:40 am Orientation to Hope Church 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Gordon Wiersma, preaching</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 6 pm Fish Club & High Hopes	4 5 pm Executive Committee 6:15 pm Stewardship & Finance 6:30 pm Centering Prayer	5 1 pm Early Worship Ministry 6 pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	6 ~ Ash Wednesday 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 9:30 am Circle 1 9:30 am Circle 2 10 am Disability Housing Task Force 5 pm Community Supper Ash Wednesday: 6 pm Dinner 7 pm Service	7 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	8	9
10 ~ First Sunday in Lent 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Gordon Wiersma</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 9:40 am 6th & 7th Grade Sunday School 9:40 am G.I.F.T. Class 9:40 am High Hopes Unshowered 9:40 am Parenting Class 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship~ <i>communion, Beth Carroll</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 12 pm Second Sunday Snacks	11 11 am REST Support Group 7 pm Consistory & Board of Elders and Deacons	12 10:30 am Coffee at Appledorn South	13 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 7:35 am Discerning our Future 3 pm Bible Study 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 6:30 pm Lent Evening Prayer 7 pm Circle 4	14 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	15	16
17 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Beth Carroll</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 9:40 am Orientation to Hope Church 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship <i>Cindi Veldheer DeYoung, preaching</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 12:15 pm Blood Pressure Clinic 6 pm Fish Club & High Hopes	18 6:30 pm Centering Prayer 6:45 pm Congregational Care & Health	19	20 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 12 pm Building & Grounds 1 pm Readers 4 pm Fellowship 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 6:30 pm Lent Evening Prayer 7:30 pm Chancel Choir	21 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	22	23
24 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Karmen Kooyers</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am 6th & 7th Grade Sunday School 9:40 am G.I.F.T. Class 9:40 am High Hopes Unshowered 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship~ <i>communion,</i> <i>healing prayer service</i> <i>Gordon Wiersma, preaching</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 12:15 pm Pizza Sunday	25 11 am REST Support Group	26	27 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 3 pm Bible Study 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 6:30 pm Lent Evening Prayer	28 9:30 am Newsletter Assembly 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	29	30
31 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Kay Hubbard</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Jill Russell, preaching</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship						