



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

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

Volume 62, No. 6

Summer (June/July/August) 2019

In This Issue

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Think Hope | 2 |
| New Staff | 3 |
| Children's Ministry | 3 |
| Kids Hope | 4 |
| Fellowship Ministry | 5 |
| Youth Ministry | 5 |
| Poetry Corner | 6-7 |
| WSN Update | 8 |
| Bread for the World | 8 |
| Creation Care | 9 |
| Summer Hospitality | 9 |
| Congregational Care | 10 |
| And Finally | 11 |

Inserts:

- *Summer Flyer*

The deadline for the
Fall Kick Off (September/
October/November)
newsletter is Tuesday,
August 13.

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



Changes to the Hope Church Newsletter

Personnel Committee

The Communications Committee has recommended and Consistory has approved changes to the definition and nature of the Hope Church newsletter, to accomplish a number of objectives:

- To broaden the variety of communications available to Hope Church members, reflecting the varieties of activities and seasons of our life together.
- To increase the predictability for readers about what kinds of things can be found where.
- To balance resources across both print and electronic media (while keeping people without technology access fully connected).

Beginning with this current summer issue, we will be making the Hope Church News more "magazine-like," publishing on a seasonal schedule (fall kick-off, Advent, Season of Reconciliation, Lent, and Summer) instead of monthly (with a two-month summer issue). The vision is to have a more thoughtful/thought-provoking publication, encouraging reflection. Recent content from Caring for Creation and Congregational Care and Health and the Poetry Corner exemplify the direction we propose.

We will be making additional changes to ensure the same information currently published in the newsletter is still available (and note that much is already published concurrently elsewhere):

- We'll produce the monthly calendar (including At Home with the Word and upcoming birthdays) and make it available electronically and as printed copies in the Gathering Area.
- We'll institute a weekly bulletin announcement email, containing those sections of the bulletin.
- We'll make the mailed-printed-bulletin service, currently available by special request, a genuine opt-in program for those who aren't present each week and don't have technology access. If you would like to opt in to receiving the bulletin mailed to you each week, please sign up in the gathering area!

Think Hope A Success

Community Ministry

Sincere appreciation to all who helped make the April 27th Think Hope event a reality, including those who donated auction items, prepared food, and planned and set up; those who served, provided table decor, and cleaned up; and those who ate, chatted, laughed, purchased auction items, and will still deliver food or services. Over \$5,000 was raised to support Escape Ministries in serving the youth of our community - thank you! And special thanks to our fearless leader, Lois Maassen!





New Custodian: Alex Faga

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee is pleased to announce that Alex Faga has been hired to serve Hope Church as custodian. Alex began training on Sunday, May 19, and starts officially on Saturday, June 1. Alex was born and raised in Holland. He is father to his beautiful 5 year old daughter, Lilli. His hobbies include cars, spending time with his daughter, creating one of a kind tables, and trying all sorts of delicious foods from every new place he travels to. Join us in welcoming Alex to Hope Church!

Bruce Ten Haken Returning as Administrative Assistant

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee is pleased to announce that Bruce Ten Haken has returned to serve Hope Church as Administrative Assistant in addition to the housekeeper role that he is currently fulfilling. We are thrilled to have Bruce return to this position and work in the office on Sundays and Tuesday afternoons.

Children's Ministry

Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director

Summer Church School

Children ages 3 through those that have completed 2nd grade will leave the 10:00 a.m. worship service after the Word with the Children and meet in Room 204. They will be learning more about God's wonderful world and ways they are able to show love and concern for the world now and for the future. Nursery care will continue to be provided during the service.

Children Remaining in Worship and Opportunities for Service

As we begin the summer schedule at Hope Church your family's worship experience will be going through some changes. Children who have completed 3rd grade and older will be remaining in the sanctuary throughout the service. We are hoping to help your child with this transition.

We encourage your child to take a **Plug into Worship** paper found at the entrances to the sanctuary and use this to enrich their worship. They will be given the opportunity to respond to what they have heard the pastors say, to the music shared and the prayers offered. They will also be asked to think about how they can bring that

with them into the week ahead. They may put the responses into a box located on the Welcome Center desk after the service or this may be an opportunity for you, the parents, to have a discussion about the service during the week and the brochure may be returned the next time you attend worship. After they have returned three papers, they may come to me to pick out a prize.

There are also **Pew Bags** available for all the children divided by two age levels. They will be located in the narthex. The bag will contain a clipboard, paper, crayons and some other activity materials. Please have your child return them after the service so that they will be restocked each week.

Some of the older elementary children has expressed interest in **helping in the nursery** during the service. Although this has traditionally been for the youth exclusively, the Christian Education Ministry with the input from our primary nursery caregiver, Margaret Buckley, has decided to open this opportunity to your older elementary children. There will be a

signup sheet in the nursery and your child may sign up for a week starting this June. They will be given some guidance about their responsibilities and the expectations for their involvement. We hope they will help make the nursery a welcoming place for the youngest members of Hope Church. Please make the decision together as a family communicating that nursery helpers are there to do just that. Your child will be committing to help with the care of the toddlers and will be expected to be there the week they have chosen. If they are interested in helping with **Summer Church School**, please have them contact Jocelyn Van Heest and once again they will be reminded that they are to be of help with the other children.

I hope that your child will feel welcomed and find interest in the worship service but I realize that the transition can be difficult. Together we can help plug your child into summer worship. If I can be of help in any way or if you have any questions please contact me.

Kids Hope USA

Tim Pennings, Kids Hope Mentor

A while back I learned how elephants are trained in rural Thailand. A small young elephant is attached with a chain to a stake pounded deep into the ground. The youngster will pull for several days until it finally gives up. With this experience deep in mind, the adult elephant (weighing up to 10,000 pounds) will remain in place when chained to a small stake that it could easily pull out with a single tug.

Parents recently brought their precocious pre-teen to me for some mathematical guidance. They recounted another interesting natural phenomena. When the University of Arizona designed and built the enclosed, self-contained biosphere in 1990, they planted palm trees within it. Without any environmental strains to hamper the growth, these trees quickly grew straight and tall. But then, to everyone's surprise, they snapped in two. Upon investigation, it was discovered that in natural conditions, stress from wind causes the wood fiber of palm trees to form strong, knurly, interconnected fibers. Without that stress, the fibers grew in isolated parallel strands that proved unable to support the tree.

These two examples from the natural world share a lesson – one that is also contained in the ancient wisdom of Buddhism. This philosophy of life uses the notion of karma to describe how the quality of one's life is the combination of one's own choices and the advantages or disadvantages of birth. True enough.

Experiences from early life are crucially important in determining the quality of the future life of the adult.

I learned that lesson yearly as I taught a senior seminar class at Hope College for a couple of decades. Towards the end of the course, students would write life-view papers that described their values and beliefs. These papers

were often deeply personal – reaching back into their childhood. I regularly left those classes amazed and even shaken that students who sat next to each other all semester had such different life stories – some filled with trauma, others with kindness, love and opportunity. I was shaken because I realized a truth: No matter how good life might be in the future, no matter how much love, kindness and opportunity, lives that are malnourished during childhood will forever bear the marks.

That's my motivation for being a mentor for Kids Hope USA, an organization conceived by Virgil Gulker of Holland, Michigan 25 years ago and now spread throughout the nation. Forming partnerships between churches and schools, the goal is to provide academic and relational mentoring to at-risk children in the first through the fifth grades. With more than 1400 church-school partnerships reaching over 25,000 children, the leadership remains in West Michigan with the recent appointment of Karen Pearson of Holland as president.

Over the past twenty years I have mentored six children. One memorable moment was in 2014 when I met with a newly assigned first grader. At our very first meeting he immediately had two questions for me: "Am I your only child? Will you be with me next year?" The first time we met! This was not then a testimony of my ability to build relationships. Instead it was a testament to his deep, urgent need for a special relationship. For the next four years, I'd come every Tuesday to find him with one eye watching the door, and leaping out of his seat when he saw me.

My present child is not so effusive, but I can see the fruits of our relationship as well. Last week the fifth grader pouted and crossed his arms as he is prone to do when I don't give him the

answers for his worksheet. Judging that our relationship had adequately deepened, I told him sternly, "Either stop that behavior, or I'm going home and you're going back to class. I'm coming here to help you and spend time with you – it's up to you." His attitude changed instantly. I raised the bar for his behavior, and he rose to it. Our relationship and his life will be the better for it.

Having taught for almost forty years, I am convinced that the three crucial personal qualities needed for successful living are: i) grit (perseverance), ii) imagination (creative thinking), and iii) people skills (ability to relate to, empathize with, and understand people). Significantly, I can work on and see progress in all of these areas with my Kids Hope children.

Today while loading my groceries from the cart into my car at Meijer, it occurred to me that there are three kinds of people: i) those who don't return their cart to the cart corral, ii) those who bring back their cart, and iii) those who bring back another cart as well. The world desperately needs more of this third type of person – those who are not satisfied with doing just what is required of them, but who go the extra mile to leave the world a better place. The world needs them, and, more importantly, a child needs them.

I asked Tim to write the Kids Hope article for this summer issue and I enjoyed reading it and hope you did too. If you feel inspired to make a child's life better as Tim has done I sure could use some new mentors starting this Fall. Please pray about it and if the spirit leads sign up on the Kids Hope Bulletin Board. Your life and the life of a child will be forever changed because you step forward to help. Thanks, ~Vicki Rumpsa, Kids Hope USA Director

ministry/committee HIGHLIGHT

This series of highlights on ministries/committees at Hope Church is intended to be sure our members are aware of how things happen and their opportunities to engage.

Fellowship Ministry

Joyce Teusink, Fellowship Ministry co-chair

The Fellowship Ministry has many opportunities for summer activities this year! You could meet us at the Felt Mansion for a concert, come camping at Cranhill, enjoy the music at Kollen Park, or have a picnic and spend an evening at Teusink's Pony Farm! One can find more information about these events in the summer flyer, the bulletin, our church website, or you could ask a member of our Fellowship Ministry Team. All of these activities and many more fall under the umbrella of the Fellowship Ministry.

The Fellowship Ministry tries to incorporate activities for the congregation, offering opportunities for fellowship and also providing the background for spiritual growth. Some of the events we sponsor are treasured traditions in our spiritual

lives, such as the Maundy Thursday Seder, the Lenten Series, and the Easter Brunch. We also host Advent activities in December, where families can come together to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

We plan the Fall Kick-Off Picnic with subs and ice cream sundaes in the fall and the Congregational Meeting with a potluck and soups in January. We help provide the food and coordinate these events. We are always looking for volunteers to help with set-up, preparation of food, and cleanup.

Another favorite activity is Pizza Sunday. The last Sunday of the month (unless otherwise noted) is Pizza Sunday. We have pizza and salad after our morning worship. This is a great time to get to know new members of

the congregation as well as visiting with "old" friends. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the Gathering Area. Groups of friends, families (usually two), or different groups from the church take turns helping with set-up, serving, and clean-up.

Our current Fellowship Ministry Team consists of Barbara Bright, Tom Bultman, Cathy Green (co-chair), Marilee Nieuwsma, and Joyce Teusink (co-chair), with staff support from Megan Arevalo.

If you have a special event you would like to help with, or if you would like to join our team, just contact any of our members. Come and join us for Hope Church Fellowship!

Youth Ministry

Beth Carroll, Assistant Pastor of Discipleship

As part of Hope Church's work with the RCA's Growing Young Cohort, our Growing Young team recently had a listening session with Hope Church's youth. We asked the youth several questions about their feelings about church and what it is like to be a young person today. It was encouraging and inspiring to hear what matters most to them and to learn both what they love about our church, as well where our opportunities lie in connecting them more deeply to our greater church life. I thought many of you would appreciate hearing a few of the statements expressing what Hope Church middle schoolers and high schoolers love most about our church community:

- "I love the Appalachian Trail trip. You get close to everyone you are with and it is a cool opportunity to make memories."
- "Pizza Sunday! I love pizza and sitting with everyone."
- "I enjoy listening in on adult education classes --- the class today on climate change was interesting because it went with what I am learning in class."
- "I like the open-minded atmosphere at Hope Church and especially the forward-looking attitude that is included in sermons."
- "I like how Hope Church includes youth – youth Sunday was really fun."
- "I like the name Hope. It is the name of the college I cheer for."
- "I love our Children in Worship program – both when I was kid and now that I go up to help my Mom. I like how the stories get more layered as you get older. I still learn something new even when I am there helping."
- "I like the smaller size of our youth program, especially for the mission trips. There is more leniency and it is more laid back."

It is wonderful to hear how our youth feel our church is theirs. You can look forward to hearing more about the values of our youth in the months to come, both in newsletter updates and with some of the upcoming work with the Growing Young cohort. In fact, it's not too late to get involved! If you are interested in shaping our culture to become more intergenerational, consider joining our Growing Young Leadership Group. It is a low time commitment opportunity, only a couple hours a month, and you have the opportunity to hear and help the needs of younger people and older adults alike! Whether you're 19, 99, or any age in between, we need YOU! Contact Pastor Beth for more details.

Poetry Corner

hosted by Randy Smit and Rhonda Edgington

It is with much gratitude that we welcome words treasured and shared in this installment of Poetry Corner from our dear friend Rachelle Oppenhuizen. We simply invite you to witness again here, her creative and compassionate presence as a contemplative healer and guide to many throughout the community. ~Randy

One of my favorite poets is Jenny Miller. Jenny is a self-published poet with a recent collection entitled "So Far." If you'd like more information about the collection, you can contact me at racheller.o@gmail.com. I would encourage anyone who finds her "voice" as compelling as I do, to check out a few of her longer pieces in "So Far." Jenny's compositions are such pure expressions of awe and discovery of the treasure within firmly rooted in nature and oozing a sincere delight/gratitude. There's a deep reverberation and affirmation of life in her writing, even in the pieces that include loss and struggle and absence. I love her poems because I love her spirit and I can hear her so clearly when I read her poems, even though she's not actually speaking in my ear.

back to the heavens

just now, say only nothing.

right here is where you belong.
I mean Here, under this blue sky, where the gold
of day fades
into sheltering night.

still yourself. plant your feet into the
answering earth. can you feel it? between the
drumbeats of your heart
there is a vast space; there is
prayer.

trace hidden Pleiades with your finger
thread the southern cross. wherever your
desires journey
the rest of you
will follow.

a silver star shimmers on the pale horizon.
place it on your tongue. what you speak
back to the heavens
becomes
your
life.

Jenny Miller

I offer "You are released into the freedom of some afternoon" because it may be fun (or of interest) for others who have written to this prompt from Laurie Baron to see where it took me. It reconnects me to the experiences of my life at that point in time, and I loved the synchronicity of the "reply" from Thomas Merton which arrived a couple of days later. That's just plain juicy stuff--the synchronicity felt like art, even though the language of the reflection felt a bit closer to klompendingancing than to ballet.

But this is why poetry is a "go-to" condition for me when meaning is lurking in some mystery. For the same reason that Vincent van Gogh could not stifle the impulse (his soulful response=praise) to paint sunflowers or a starry, starry sky, or irises in the garden of the mental hospital. Poetry arises from a desire to explore (worship within?) the relationship

continued on page 7

with life, with my own life and the life of the whole world, and see what is happening in that place where they overlap. "Mandorla" is a word for the fish-shape that is created where two side-by-side circles are overlapped. Visually, when it's presented in some religious art it offers a symbol that cues the viewer that the contents of the mandorla are set apart--as sacred content, and are to be taken as such. It's not an attempt to offer explicit explanation, but rather an invitation to immersion and from there to relationship. Exploring that space where language and experience overlap is an art form that some people are more naturally graceful with than others. But poetic expression, graceful or not, provides the soul with a way to listen for meaning in the experiences and images that arise in one's own life and to bring language to them so that, perhaps, they may be shared with others.

You are released in the freedom of some afternoon

and you begin again to explore what you've never quite dared to trust about that word—"freedom". Some patriots call it "liberty", certain Christians may add, "from sin", adolescents carve it from parent love grown too confining and fearful of loss, while saints and mystics speak or unspeak it as "detachment".

Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose...

Janice's acid-soaked voice cuts through your brain,
as you listen through the noise of your molars closing on your lunchtime salad
to the fading echo of those moments a few months ago
when you stood in your kitchen, quietly cutting onions and carrots

and listened to the survivors of Katrina
(a few) who tried to tell of what it was they'd found—
they'd lost everything that typifies the ordinary
and discovered, hidden within their empty surprise
Something.

This afternoon's release may be that—or some such nothing—
a small release from this morning's anticipations,
the searching, the planning, the what-ifs and grocery list,
the return-to-the-workweek rhythm
of "have a good day" mid-winter Monday-farewells...

even as your mind keeps reviewing
the black-and-white photos in the dresser
that summon maybes and mild shock.
There's just enough not knowing for sure in this or any space
for certainties or absolutes with which to rule the world

and thus you are released in the freedom of this afternoon
with the grains of this day's remains at rest as mercies in your palm
which in your small and artful way you hold dear and let them be
as sand, rice, salt, seeds, pebbles for one's shoe? Or because of the salad
and the irresistible sound of the word, perhaps they will be peppercorns?

(or simply)
moments for no known measure.

Rachelle Oppenhuizen

2/6/06

...from Merton's The Inner Experience (p. 151) two days later:

"Is there indeed, a mysterious stream of reality and of meaning running through the history of mankind? If so, who is called to discover it and travel with it?...But as soon as you start to measure it, it is no longer there."

Washington School Neighbors

Lisa Kasten, Neighborhood Connector

Washington School Neighbors is always looking for residents that are willing to serve on our Board of Directors. You do not need to live in the WSN area of outreach in order to serve. You only need a heart for neighbors from diverse backgrounds and the ability to attend monthly meetings, held on the 4th Thursday of the month from 12:30 to 2 pm at Herrick District Library. As a member of a church within the WSN neighborhood, you are an important part of our support community and we would value your perspective and input on ways we can empower neighbors within the WSN neighborhood.

If you would like more information about this opportunity, please email: lisa@washingtonschoolneighbors.com

All of our monthly board meetings are open to the public, so if you would like to get a firsthand look at what we seek to accomplish in this neighborhood, feel free to stop by.

More information at: washingtonschoolneighbors.com

WashingtonSchoolNeighbors.com

Facebook.com/WashingtonSchoolNeighbors

Thank You

Thank you so much for all of the cards, prayers, words of sympathy in the passing of my dad. Even though Hope is not my "home" church, I still feel like it is my "church". Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

~Karla Kammeraad-Bos, Hope Church Financial Administrator

Bread for the World - Offering of Letters, Sunday, June 9

Tom Arendshorst and Tom Bultman, Hope Church members

We of Hope Church are a *Bread for the World* covenant church. *Bread for the World* is a collective Christian voice, moved by God's grace in Jesus Christ, urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Our faithful advocacy makes a difference. Last year, the 2018 Offering of Letters was victorious in securing passage of the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act with overwhelming bipartisan support. The bill ensured that the Feed the Future initiative would continue to support smallholder farmers and improve the nutrition needs of women and children around the world. And, while Congress ended the year having not approved all its funding bills, both the House and the Senate appropriations committees increased funding for global nutrition. Congress also approved a Farm Bill that protects the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and improves international food aid programs. Yet, far too many of our neighbors continue

to struggle to buy nutritious food and secure jobs with livable wages.

- In 2017, the number of people experiencing hunger around the world increased for the third year in a row. Much of the increase in hunger is due to climate change, conflict, and economic downturns.
- Forty-five percent of all preventable child deaths are linked to malnutrition.
- Nutrition programs for pregnant women and young children are highly cost effective. Every dollar spent on them produces on average a \$16 return from reduced health care costs and people's improved ability to participate in the labor market.
- One in 4 of the world's children (151 million children) suffers from physical and cognitive stunting.

Unfortunately, programs that provide help and opportunity to people in need are increasingly vulnerable

due to the actions, and inactions, of government officials in Washington, D.C. Just as Esther was called to stand up and advocate on behalf of her people to the king of Persia, we too are called to stand up and advocate with and on behalf of our communities to government leaders in Washington, D.C. We must urge our nation's leaders to protect programs that are vital for people who are struggling with hunger and poverty.

Bread for the World's 2019 Offering of Letters: Better Nutrition, Better Tomorrow is an opportunity to put your faith into action. All children deserve the opportunity to live a healthy life and reach their full potential. Join us in making this opportunity a reality!

We will be offering our letters on June 9 following the 10 AM service. Look for our table in the gathering area before and after the service.

Every Little Thing

Peter Boogaart, Creation Care Coordinator

We have an 'environmental' crisis because we have consented to an economy in which by eating, drinking, working, resting, traveling, and enjoying ourselves we are destroying the natural, god-given world.

~Wendell Berry (2001). *"In the Presence of Fear: Three Essays for a Changed World"*

Is Wendell Berry the new John Calvin? You know—where every little thing you do is evidence of total depravity. You heard what he said--Right? "....by eating, drinking, working, resting, traveling, and enjoying ourselves we are destroying the natural, god-given world." That doesn't leave much out does it? No wonder some people long for a rapture! Get me out of here, please!

Alright, I just asked that question to be provocative and perplexing. But perplexation isn't a bad place to be. Jesus used the technique all the time. Most parables were intended to perplex the listeners. When your foundation is challenged, you either resist and double-down or you ask, "What should I do now?" Jesus preferred the latter response. When your guard is down, you're more open to a new way of being.

I believe that Berry is asking us to intentionally evaluate our way of living and to thoughtfully make changes; but change is hard. I need provide no proof; you know I'm right—ask any smoker or dieter. Oh, and by the way; how's that exercise program going for you? It gets worse, he wants us to change the economy, the entire economy. Think of the complexity!

Berry isn't actually asking us to change; he's asking us to be who we say we are. We are the people who through grace and the ministry of Christ have already been changed. We are the people who step by step are moving away from a defeated way of living and into a newer joyous life. We accept change. It's our MO.

So, in the step-by-step mode, let me suggest some creation care options:

1. Schedule outdoor time. You were created from the dust of the earth and need to maintain the connection:
 - a. Ottawa County parks has yearlong activities. Get one of their brochures from the Creation Care bulletin board.
 - b. Join the Creation Care outings: June 29 Kayaking, July 7 Bicycling, and August 28 Wall Climbing.
2. Gather your bills and establish a baseline; you can't make change in a vacuum.
 - a. How many vehicle miles do you drive annually? How much gas to heat your home? How much electricity? Could you use less? —you won't know unless you intentionally evaluate.
3. Join with others:
 - a. Katherine Hayhoe says that 40% of fighting climate change is individual, the rest requires collective action. Find your group whether it be fighting for trees, water, pollution controls, or climate change.
4. Think like a building supervisor. It's you; you're in charge. The cavalry isn't coming:
 - a. Your household can be managed for simplicity and efficiency.
 - b. You can manage for zero waste.

Christianity presents a different way of being in the world. Your steps away from the older, destructive, way of being will be good news to those who remain stuck in the old ways. Let's work together on that. Blessings and peace.

Summer Hospitality!!!

Since our mission at Hope Church is to ensure that visitors feel welcome, find love and discover hope, please make certain to greet summer guests!!

Congregational Care & Health Ministry

Sharon Arendshorst, Congregational Care and Health Ministry Chair

Many members of our congregation visit, send notes and cards, and pray for those among us who are no longer able to attend church or be as active in Hope Church as they might like. Some of us reach out without anyone knowing. (Bless you!) Others do so as a part of the Congregational Care and Health Ministry team (CCHM). All manners of connecting provide encouragement and loving concern, and are a part of the larger circle of care provided to members of Hope Church.

The CCHM is looking for new team members who will join us in our extension of care. We meet six times a year to encourage one another, to review with Pastor Jill and Parish Nurse Ginger those on the congregational care list, and to identify who will be visiting with them in the coming months. When we make our contacts (visit, call or card) we inform the church office. This helps the pastors and parish nurse make sure no one falls through the cracks and augments their pastoral visits. We also oversee a few other areas of care.

I've asked two recent retirees from the CCHM to share their perspectives on their years of involvement in this caring ministry.

Bette Williams writes: "A few thoughts about my many years participating in Congregational Care. The first that comes to mind is the encouraging feeling of being a part of the caring community that is present just within the committee. Every meeting is a sharing of cares and concern with others that is so important in my faith life. It is hard to explain how important it is to me to share with others for whom I care and who care for me. We share a meditation and prayer time at the beginning of the meetings and end the meetings with shared prayer, too. I always come away with encouragement that this is Hope Church— this is my life and care, my relationship with God within the church.

Many years ago, my adult son was here visiting. He went with me to visit an older, disabled couple and take a meal to them. We stayed a short time for conversation and a prayer. When we were leaving he said, "That's so cool to do that for them. It tells me what your church is about!"

The stories of visiting others could go on and on!! I always feel that I profit so much from the time with those I visit! Sometimes they want to tell old Hope Church stories. Sometimes they are unable to speak at all, but the feeling is there. When we go through the list of those in need in Hope Church, it always strikes me that as each name is read, or mentioned, that it is so clear that an unsaid prayer for that person is going around the table where we sit!"

Carla Beach writes: "My experience of Congregational Care Ministry visits gave me an appreciation for what persons at this stage of life are vs. the stereotypes that pervade our culture.

Everyone I visited, regardless of the presence of age-related cognitive changes, was gracious and grateful to be remembered by their church family. They spoke positively of their children and grandchildren's continued involvement in their lives, they were positive about the care they were receiving from staff at the facility, and they continued to do what they could to build connections with other residents.

They were philosophical about their situations, coped with humor and acceptance, expressed gratitude for the lives they had led and inevitably still longed for those past lives. They were not defeated by their current situations nor were they in denial about their current state and what lay ahead in this journey.

I was inspired by these strong women and men and it has made dealing with my own aging process less stressful. I know that I have choices about how to deal with what lies ahead and I am confident that my church will be there for me as my own journey progresses."

The Congregational Care and Health Ministry invites you to join us in this circle of care by joining our ministry team. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

and finally: thank you!

Thank you for all of your support in my completing my Doctor of Ministry degree.

I could stop there since that's pretty much all I have to say, but I'll say a bit more, while keeping it shorter than my doctoral thesis. :)

There's been a lot of congratulations and celebrating for the occasion of my DMin degree from McCormick Theological Seminary. Back in February when I successfully completed and presented my doctoral thesis for approval, there was a wonderful round of congratulations that came my way. Then at the commencement ceremony in Chicago on May 11, I received my Doctor of Ministry degree and was honored with a commendation from the faculty for my thesis, and that commencement weekend was swamped with another wonderful wave of congratulations and celebration. And now as this newsletter will be sent out for June and the summer, the congregation is holding a celebratory reception for me for the completion of my DMin with a reception on Sunday, June 23 - I'm looking forward to cake and kind words as part of further congratulations. And at that point, it will be time for the celebrations and congratulations to be done! But as we do move on from the congratulations, I want to say something more about my "thank you" and something about what will continue.

First, something more about "thank you."

At the May 11 commencement, as I processed into the majestic church sanctuary where the ceremony was held, I was struck by a most beautiful sight. My eyes caught the beaming faces of my family – wife, children, Mom, siblings; I saw the proud expressions of the numerous Hope Church contingent – colleagues, friends, my church family. It was a profoundly moving moment for me, as what I have felt all along through my Doctor of Ministry studies was there in front of me to fully soak in: the tremendous support of my wife and family, the energizing encouragement of my colleagues and congregation, which together have made this all possible for me. I appreciate all the affirmation that has been given to me, and I'm very proud of the work and accomplishment of what this degree represents for me. But the achievement is so integrally connected to those strong circles of support that surround me, and in that processional moment at commencement my gratitude to all of you and my gratitude to God for all of you came together inside of me in a beautiful and powerful way that I will carry with me always.

Thank you.

And finally, something about what will continue now that the celebrations are done.

It may sound cliché to say this DMin degree is not an ending but a beginning, but if that is so then I am going to go with the cliché! This Doctor of Ministry degree has not been an academic exercise disconnected from my ministry and the life of Hope Church. It has been an opportunity for me to delve into how Hope Church has been a community of faithfulness through the generations and then for me to offer resources of theology, liturgy and spiritual formation that support and deepen that faithfulness. What my work has helped to bring to light is that Hope Church's generational commitments to compassion and justice, to inclusive welcome and worship, to reconciliation and community – these are the very things that are at the heart of Gospel salvation and that reflect the heart of God. And these are the things that continue in our life together, as the Spirit leads and teaches, challenges and calls us to new and renewed ways to show the love of Christ alive in God's world. I certainly AM glad that the academic part of the DMin is done! – but mostly I'm grateful that I've had the opportunity to better understand and nurture who we are as a community of faith, and I am deeply grateful to continue on this path with you.

In Christ's Peace – *Reverend Doctor Gordon S. Wiersma*

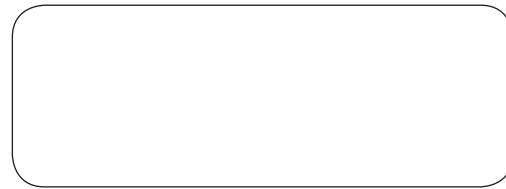
Hope Church
77 West 11th Street
Holland MI 49423



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Holland, MI 49423
Permit No. 607

Hope Church News

Summer 2019



Adult Education Ministry will host General Synod Review on July 14

Judy Parr, Adult Education Ministry Chair

The 2019 General Synod of the Reformed Church in America will be held at Hope College June 6–11. Delegates will include Larry Schuyler, Carol Bechtel, Jim Brownson, and Max DeLeau. Others present in official capacities will include Terry DeYoung (staff, Disability Concerns), Dan Griswold (Holland Classis Coordinator/Stated Clerk); Lynn Japinga (member of the Commission on History) and Jane Schuyler (member of the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education). As in previous summers, the Adult Education Ministry will host a panel discussion to review the General Synod. Participants on the panel will include some or all of those from among those listed. The General Synod Review will be held in the sanctuary after the worship service on July 14 and will last about an hour.

June 2019

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|---|--|---|-----------|---|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 9:50 am Nursery 10 am Worship, <i>Mary VanAndel, preaching ~ ordination of new consistory members, profession of faith</i> 10:15 am Church School 11:00 am Profession of Faith Reception 11:00 am Leader Appreciation Reception 11:15 am Family Promise Meeting | 3 | 4 | 5 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 9:30 am Circle 1 1:30 pm Circle 2 6:15 pm Carillon Choir 7:30 pm Chancel Choir | 6 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (Central Park Church) | 7 | 8 June 8 - 14 Appalachian Trail Trip |
| 9~Pentecost Sunday 9:50 am Nursery 10 am Worship, <i>Micah McCreary, preaching ~ Communion</i> 10:15 am Church School 11:00 am Second Sunday Snacks | 10 11 am REST Support Group 5 pm Creation Care 6 pm New Consistory Orientation 7:15 pm Consistory & Board of Elders/Deacons | 11 | 12 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 7:35 am Discerning our Future 7 pm Circle 4 | 13 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (Central Park Church) | 14 | 15 |
| 16 9:50 am Nursery 10 am Worship, <i>Justin Meyers, preaching</i> 10:15 am Church School | 17 12 pm Facility Strategy 6:30 pm Christian Education 6:45 pm Congregational Care & Health 7:30 pm Reconciliation | 18 10 am - 3 pm Future Leaders for Justice | 19 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 10 am - 3 pm Future Leaders for Justice 12 pm Readers 12 pm Building & Grounds 4 pm Fellowship 4:30 pm Community | 20 10 am - 3 pm Future Leaders for Justice 2-4 pm Nurse 6 pm Brim Bunch 7 pm Volleyball (Central Park Church) | 21 | 22 |
| 23 9:50 am Nursery 10 am Worship, <i>Jill Russell, preaching</i> 10:15 am Church School 11:15 am Pizza Sunday 11:15 am Doctor of Ministry Celebration for Pastor Gordon 11:15 am Blood Pressure Clinic | 24 11 am REST Support Group 6:30 pm Personnel 7 pm Worship | 25 | 26 6:15 am Men's Breakfast | 27 10 am Accessibility 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 6:30 pm Summer Concert Series & Picnic at Felt Mansion 7 pm Volleyball (Central Park Church) | 28 | 29 9:30 am - 1 pm Kayak/Canoe Outing |
| 30 9:50 am Nursery 10 am Worship, <i>Gordon Wiersma, preaching</i> 10:15 am Church School 11:30 am Growing Young Listening Event | | | | | | |