



# SALT & LIGHT

a hope church publication

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# OUR FAITH

Hope Church is called by God and equipped by the Holy Spirit to be a witness to the unity, reconciliation and justice given in the saving grace of Jesus Christ. These touchstones drawn from the Belhar Confession give voice to the historic Christian faith in our time and place.

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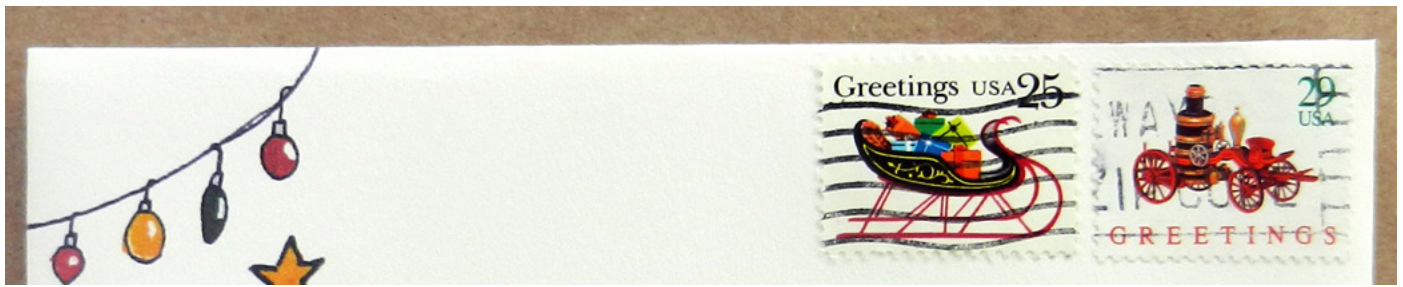


# For Children, a New Church Year

*by Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's  
Ministry Director*

Ask any worshipper from the Children in Worship centers, and they will tell you that it is the beginning of the church year. As we enter a new church year, it's a good time to remind those of you who remain in the sanctuary that the stories that are being told in each worship center are listed in the bulletin each week. We encourage you to engage a child in conversation about their worship experience. We also encourage anyone who is interested to join the children in worship on any Sunday. This is an excellent way to show your interest in the children and let them know that their worship is also an important part of Hope Church.

The Church School children will participate in special Advent activities through the season. They will be hearing wonderful stories about the birth of Jesus and doing lots of activities celebrating the coming of the Christ child.



## Opportunities for Giving

### Gift Cards for Families

Hope Church is again supporting Christmas gift cards (our goal is 60) for families within our church and community, and your enthusiastic support is greatly appreciated. Here's how to:

1. Remove a tag from the tree on December 1 or 8
2. Purchase a greeting card and a **\$25 gift card** from Meijer, Target, or Walmart
3. Personalize the greeting card with holiday greetings and blessings for the New Year
4. Return **UNSEALED** envelope containing greeting card and gift card to church by **Sunday, December 15**
5. Hope Church will deliver all cards to Hope Church families and local ministries

With gift cards, parents can make decisions together about gifts for their families and enjoy the experience of shopping for and wrapping presents. The gifts under their trees reflect their love, individual attention, and family Christmas traditions. Your personal greetings for the season are an important part of this project! God's blessings for your generosity in supporting this project, as we join together our gifts and prayers to express the love of God in our community.

### Christmas Cards for Our Members

Enrich your Advent season by sharing Christmas cards by **December 15** with members who will receive caroling. Decorated gift bags for each will be on pegboards in the Gathering Area to collect your card contributions.

### Christmas Cookies for Caroling & Open House

We're looking for home-baked Christmas cookies to share during our caroling and the Christmas Eve Young Adult Open House. Sign up in the Gathering Area or on an online form to us know how many dozen cookies you are able to bring to the church by **December 8**. Thank you for making this season special!

### White Gift Offering of Personal Care Products

On Epiphany **Sunday, January 5**, bring a personal care product for a child or woman, wrapped in white tissue paper. These gifts will be brought forward during the offering and later given to Resilience (formerly Center for Women in Transition), a local agency assisting women and families caught in abusive relationships and empowering a hopeful future for them.

### Christmas Card Mailing List

LeVada Bombe  
 Ted & Shirley Bosch  
 Dan DeGraaf  
 Helen DeWeerd  
 Peggy Fitzgerald  
 Marjorie French  
 Pellebon-Smith Family  
 Ellen Hale  
 Michael Henry  
 Betty Hildore  
 Elsie Howard  
 Stephanie Krom  
 Joan Lalley  
 Mary Martin  
 Justin & Stephanie Meyer  
 Rode Molla & Endrias Assen  
 Rae Pearson  
 Dorothy Robinson  
 Connie Thornhill  
 Marlin VanderWilt  
 Rowland & Jane Van Es  
 Josh & Nicolay Vis  
 Lila Vohlken

# First Week of Advent: Time

“You know what time it is.” Romans 13:11



## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

8:30 a.m.

*Early Worship*

9:40 a.m.

*Adult Education  
Church School*

11:00 a.m.

*Worship*

11:15 a.m.

*Children in Worship*

4:15 p.m.

*Jubilate Choir Rehearsal*

4:30 p.m.

*Bus pick-up at Freedom Village*

4:35 p.m.

*Bus pick-up at Warm Friend*

5:00 p.m.

*Advent Crafts  
Youth Activity  
Advent Organ Recital*

6:00 p.m.

*Supper and Lighting of  
Advent Candles*

A **Special Adult Ed** session offers **Conversation with Pastor Beth Carroll**. As a follow-up to the adult ed session on November 3, the Consistory felt it would be helpful, interesting, and even fun! to have a further opportunity for conversation, particularly around Beth's assistant pastor role. As we look to the new year, in which there will be a decision about Hope Church transitioning this currently contracted position into an open-ended call to Pastor Beth, you are invited to learn, explore, and inquire about the ministry that Pastor Beth carries out. Whether or not you were able to attend in November, this is an additional forum in which Pastor Beth can share some of her ideas and vision for ministry, and in which there is opportunity for questions and input from the congregation.

The 11:00 a.m. **Worship Service** will include communion, and children will return from Children in Worship to join their parents for the sacrament.

During **Advent Crafts**, children preschool (young children accompanied by an adult or older sibling) through fifth grade will make crafts for the season. Families are encouraged to come and craft together, with some traditional Hope Church projects and some new ones, easy projects for little ones and some that challenge older kids to creativity.



The **Youth Activity** is the creation of college care packages.

A simple **Supper and Lighting of Advent Candles** unites those who attend the Advent Crafts, Organ Recital, and Youth Activity. Your family is invited to join with others for this meal and celebration.

An **Advent Organ Recital** is offered at 5 p.m. for Hope Church and the Holland Community. Rhonda Edgington will be joined by Greg Bassett on French horn and Julie Sooy on flute. They will perform music of J.S. Bach and contemporary composers for Advent and Christmas. As in previous years, some pieces are based on congregational hymns, and we will enjoy the opportunity to sing those together before hearing the pieces based on them.

Bach's Canonic Variation on the German Christmas hymn *Von Himmel hoch* is a staple of the organist's repertoire, and Rhonda decided this year was the time to finally learn it. The piece is made up of five variations, utilizing complex counterpoint (as is Bach's specialty) but is also pleasant for the listener. In many of the variations, the organist is called upon to play the hymn tune with her feet!

There will be other solo organ works, including Incarnation, with Shepherds Dancing by British composer Judith Bingham, and Toccata on Veni Emmanuel (O Come, O Come Emmanuel) by British composer Andrew Carter. Julie and Rhonda will play two movements for flute and organ by American composer

Dan Locklair, based on the hymn tune How Brightly Shines the Morning Star, and Greg and Rhonda will play a Noel for horn and organ by Lebanese/French composer Naji Hakim.

Greg plays with the Holland Symphony, St. Francis de la Sales Brass, and teaches French horn at Hope College. Julie, who has been attending Hope Church with her family, taught flute for many years at Hope College and directed the West Michigan Flute Ensemble. She also played with the Holland Symphony. She is now Academic Adviser for International and Transfer students at Sienna Heights University in Adrian.

Invite some friends who like organ music, and come ready to sing and listen!



# Second Week of Advent: Change

*"The kingdom of heaven has come near." Matthew 3:2*



## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

8:30 a.m.

*Early Worship*

10:00 a.m.

*St. Nicholas Breakfast*

11:00 a.m.

*Worship*

11:15 a.m.

*Children in Worship*

12:00 p.m.

*Gift of Hope Sale*

12:15 p.m.

*Jubilate Choir Rehearsal*

Honored at the **St. Nicholas Breakfast** is a bishop known for his kindness to people in need and to children. He gave many gifts to others in secret. The generosity of Saint Nicholas reminds us of God's love and the many good gifts that God gives to us. In St. Nicholas' spirit of giving, each child is asked to bring a small **unwrapped** gift, either purchased or homemade. They can be gently used or new toys and games, toiletries for children, books, or socks (adult or children sizes), etc. These gifts will be shared with people in the community. All children should also bring one of their own shoes. Perhaps St. Nicholas will bring gifts to fill that shoe. This intergenerational celebration will include a story, games, songs, and crafts along with a breakfast of pigs in the blanket and eggs.

In the Gathering Area, you'll find the **Gift of Hope Sale**, featuring products from the women's program of the Haiti Foundation Against Poverty available for purchase. Mallery Neptune writes, "Your purchases matter. We know the power your purchases can have, because we see the change in the lives of our very own employees and artisan partners. We see the stability and pride it gives to families who were on the brink of collapse. We see mothers whose

poverty caused them to contemplate leaving their children in an orphanage turn their economic situation completely around with a steady job. During this time of crisis these beautiful, talented families need your empowerment more than ever." Samples of the products like the bracelets in the image below can be viewed at [giftofhopehaiti.org](http://giftofhopehaiti.org).





# Christmas Offering Responds to Refugees and Immigrants

by Bruce Ten Haken, Deacon

Each morning when I wake and each night before I sleep, I read a small piece of paper on the kitchen window shelf that says, “What does the Lord require of you?” The “Micah Mandate” gives a balanced answer to today’s spiritual and political questions. In response to this mandate, the Deacons have approved two immigration-related initiatives to be supported by the Hope Church Christmas Offering.

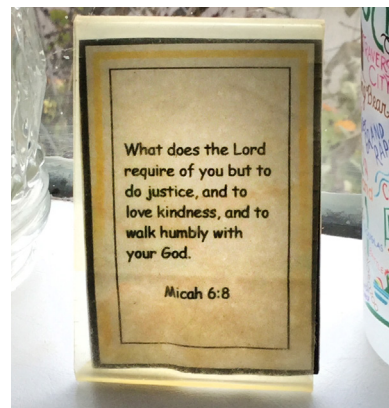
A few months past, Rev. Angel Lopez, a member of Holland Classis who serves on the staff of Third Reformed Church, spoke with us about a need and opportunity to answer the above “Micah Mandate.” Angel asked for support on behalf of his brother’s church in Mexico as they seek to offer necessary housing and care for refugees. Recently, the Holland Classis executive committee requested that the Classis of Holland endorse the raising of funds for Frontera de Gracia Ministry at the Mexican border.

*Angel’s brother, Samuel, is a pastor in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, near the border of Texas. Samuel Lopez and the Frontera de Gracia Church, Ciudad Juarez (Presbyterian Church of Mexico), has become a safe place for refugees as they await an opportunity to seek asylum in the US. Many of these refugees are from Cuba, following the directive to seek asylum in the U.S. by coming over land rather than by sea. (further information can be found at*

*[www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/obtaining-asylum-united-states](http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/obtaining-asylum-united-states).*

Angel and Samuel say that it is “not common to find an Evangelical church willing to step out in faith, sharing their resources, and receive refugees.” These refugees have no other place to go. They need housing, clothing, toiletries, and food. This is a unique opportunity, at a pivotal time, to offer life-saving hope and help, for refugees seeking asylum. This is not an ordinary programmatic request for funds; the usual agencies and structures are not in place for this refugee crisis. This is a grassroots initiative on the forefront of humanitarian aid. Endorsing this request is a step of faith that Angel, Samuel, and others are responding as best they can to a need they have seen. The ministry they are undertaking has been witnessed and supported by Melissa Stek of the CRCNA and J.J. TenClay, of RCA Global Mission’s Refugee Ministries, who affirm this unique opportunity for supporting these refugees.

The Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) is a nonprofit that promotes justice by providing free and low-cost legal services to underserved immigrant children, families, and refugees in Central and South Texas. Founded in 1986 as the Refugee Aid Project by community activists in South



Texas, RAICES has grown to be the largest immigration legal services provider in Texas. As an organization that combines expertise developed from the daily practice of immigration law with a deep commitment to advocacy, RAICES is unique among immigration organizations. A diverse staff of 240 attorneys, legal assistants, social workers, advocates, and support staff provide consultations, direct legal services, representation, assistance, and advocacy to communities in Texas and to clients after they leave the state. In 2017, RAICES staff assisted in 51,000 cases at no cost to the client. More detailed information can be found at [www.raicestexas.org](http://www.raicestexas.org).

The Consistory of Hope Church seeks your generosity in the coming Christmas Offering to address immigration issues both in a particular community and systemically.

# Third Week of Advent: Song

*“Come to Zion with singing.” Isaiah 35:10*



In **Adult Education**, Dr. Jim Brownson will lead this first of two Advent and Christmas Bible studies on the lectionary readings for this day. You can find the lectionary readings at the website entitled *lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/*. Bring your questions about any of the texts for the day, or just come hoping to learn!

On this day (and later), pre-K and elementary-age **children are encouraged to take an ornament home** with them from the tree in the Gathering Area at Hope Church. Enjoy them on your tree.

By joining **Congregational Caroling**, you can share the spirit of celebration and joy with those who find it difficult to join us. Poinsettias, gift bags, and cards will be shared as we carol. You don't need a great voice, just a smile to share. Families and persons of all ages are encouraged to participate—many voices are needed! We especially encourage young families and youth to go caroling with other Hope Church members after a pizza lunch. They love to see the children and youth!

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15**

**8:30 a.m.**  
*Early Worship*

**9:40 a.m.**  
*Adult Education*

**11:00 a.m.**  
*Worship*

**11:15 a.m.**  
*Children in Worship*

**12:15 p.m.**  
*Pizza Sunday*

**1:00 p.m.**  
*Congregational Caroling*



# Fourth Week of Advent: Signs

“God is with us.” Matthew 1:23

During the **Family Service and Pageant**, Christmas carols will be sung and the Christmas story told as we worship the Christ child together. The pageant is a wonderful way for the whole community to celebrate the music and meaning of this season as the children act out the events of the Gospel story. All children toddlers through fifth graders are invited to be a part of the presentation of the Christmas story during the family service. Costumes will be available December 15 and 22 and at 5 p.m. on December 24—or wear a costume from home. We are gathering angels, shepherd, magi, and sheep. Costumes can be very simple, and Hope Church has lots of accessories to augment. Children, visiting family, and friends are welcome.

If you’re in Holland for Christmas and post-high school through age 30, you’re invited to a **Young Adult Open House**, a special Christmas Eve Reception. Just before the Candlelight Service in the sanctuary, it will offer cookies, cider, and hot chocolate in the Gathering Area! Reconnect with past members of Fish Club and High Hopes!

**Candlelight Communion** is a time of scripture lessons, carols, and music, filling our worship in a celebration of the birth of Christ. We greet Christmas morning sharing communion together, celebrating Jesus’ birth.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

8:30 a.m.  
Early Worship  
No Church School or  
Adult Education

11:00 a.m.  
Worship

11:15 a.m.  
Children in Worship  
- costumes will be  
available for pageant

12:15 p.m.  
Jubilate Choir Rehearsal

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 p.m.  
Costumes available  
for pageant

5:30 p.m.  
Family Service  
and Pageant

10:00 p.m.  
Young Adult Open House

11:00 p.m.  
Candlelight Communion

# Christmastide

The **Christmas Season Worship Service** is a time of carols, scripture, poetry, Christmas celebration, and reflection. Children second grade and older are invited to participate in this service.

In **Adult Education**, Dr. Jim Brownson will lead this second of two Advent and Christmas Bible studies on the lectionary readings for this day. You can find the lectionary readings at the website entitled [lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/](http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/). Bring your questions about any of the texts for the day, or just come hoping to learn!

All of **Children in Worship** will worship together for a special Epiphany celebration.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29 CHRISTMAS SUNDAY

No Early Worship  
No Church School or  
Adult Education

11:00 a.m.  
Christmas Season  
Worship Service.

11:15 a.m.  
Children in Worship  
(Pre-K through first grade)

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 5 EPIPHANY

9:40 a.m.  
Adult Education, Church  
School, and Youth Classes

11:00 a.m.  
Epiphany Worship Service

11:15 a.m.  
Combined Children  
in Worship

12:15 p.m.  
Epiphany Celebration  
during Fellowship Time



## Kids Hope: Giving Gifts

by Vicki Rumpsa, Kids Hope Director

'Tis the season of gift giving. Maybe you purchase gifts throughout the year; maybe you wait until that crazy day after Thanksgiving to take advantage of some huge sales. Maybe you go online to shop, avoiding stores altogether. Or you may combine several approaches. Everyone, somehow, will finish buying just in time for Christmas, hoping their purchases will be “just the right thing.” Those types of gifts are a part of many of our lives, but I’m thinking of a different type of giving: of **time**, **encouragement**, and **prayer**.

Every year, I recruit, train, and support mentors who are assigned to students at Vanderbilt Academy. These mentors agree to **give an hour of their time** each week. Fitting this time into their busy schedules is not always easy or convenient, but they do. I would like to acknowledge those who have chosen to **give this gift of their time**; when you see them, you can give them the gift of encouragement: Rhonda Edgington, Barb Blauw, Sandy Mulder, Carole Hintz, Dave Dirkse, Karen Pearson, Tim Pennings, John Beyer, Stephanie Beyer, Lynne Hall, Dave Boelkins,

Mark Pearson, and Bob Jordan. When these mentors are not able to mentor due to sickness or other conflicts, substitute mentors **give an hour of their time** to fill in: Sharon Arendshorst, Barb Joldersma, Marilee Nieuwsma, Norma Killilea, Todd Engle, and Lisa Denison. What a wonderful group of volunteers our Kids Hope Program is blessed with!

In addition to mentors, Kids Hope USA believes that prayer is the backbone of the program. Our mentors are supported in prayer by Kari Miller Fenwood, Connie VanderVelde, Josh Bochniak, Dave Van Doorne, Todd Engle, May Buys, Jan Fike, and Vern Boersma. I am also blessed with a prayer partner, Anne Anderson, who has encouraged me as well as prayed for me, and I know how much it helps. A big thanks goes to those who uphold us with their **gift of prayer**.

Everyone involved in the Kids Hope Program needs your **gift of encouragement**. Each of us is trying to make a difference in the life of a child who faces many challenges. Kids Hope’s goal for each child is to know that another adult in their life

cares for them and will show up on a regular basis. We build a relationship throughout the child’s elementary school years and sometimes beyond. Often the time spent goes beyond school walls, when mentors take time to see their child play in a ballgame or attend a special event together. Emails share concerns as well as Progress Reports detailing how time was spent. Your encouragement of our mentors is part of what makes this Kids Hope Program one we all share in. I’d like our mentors to know that they are making a difference in the life of a child, that they are prayed for, and that they feel encouraged. Find one of them today and say “thanks.”

That’s what I call gift-giving! It’s members of Hope Church sharing their **gifts of time, prayer, and encouragement** that give our Kids Hope Program life. Thank you!

*“There are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, varieties of service but the same Lord, varieties of working but it is the same God who inspires them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” I Corinthians 12:4-7*



# Youth Ministry Updates

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by Beth Carroll, Assistant Pastor of Discipleship

Though the ministry year is well underway, it's never too late to join in on the fun that is being a youth sponsor. I have spoken with a number of you who, though curious about engaging relationships with young people, end up saying no because of some specific worries. For those of you who have more than a passing inquisitiveness about the goings-on in that corner room next to the nursery with the big beautiful picture windows overlooking the memorial garden, let me address three myths about youth leadership.

## **Myth #1 "Youth ministry takes too much time"**

This is the number one reason I hear for saying no to youth ministry. Believe me, I understand the struggle! One of the worst feelings as an adult is to say yes to a commitment only to disappoint a team because you can't follow through. However, there are a number of ways to get involved that don't require a huge time investment. First, you can become a High Hopes or Fish Club adult sponsor. Believe it or not, this is only a two-evening-a-month time commitment. Adult sponsors join our High School or Middle School ministries and spend ninety minutes two Sunday evenings a month, playing games, sharing in our devotional time, and engaging in conversation. We will even feed you dinner! This opportunity is so much fun and will foster in you hope for the future as you see for yourself just how kind, intelligent, deep-thinking, creative, and lively today's young people are. If this interests you but you know

you will need to miss several meetings, I will generously work with you to accommodate your schedule. Besides our bi-monthly evening meetings, there are also abundant one-off opportunities, like hosting us for a course for our Advent progressive dinner, providing one of our Sunday dinners, joining us for our week-long summer trips, just to name a few.

## **Myth #2 "I am too old"**

There is no right or wrong age to connect with youth. Youth love relating to and connecting with adults of all ages. In fact, studies show that some of the most vibrant churches today are vibrant because adults, retired age and older, have developed relationships with church youth. As a middle-aged youth pastor myself, I greatly enjoy the playfulness and curiosity our youth bring out in me. Interestingly, as Pastor Gordon and I are beginning to recruit GIFT class mentors for students, several youths specifically requested older

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**"...several youths specifically requested older adults to be their mentors."**

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adults to be their mentors. They love the gentleness, patience, and wisdom inherent in many of our senior members.



## **Myth #3 "Youth are too intimidating"**

I get it. The issues young people face, like cyber-bullying, grappling with sexual and gender identities, and mental health obstacles feel overwhelming. The stories we hear from the media and our greater culture certainly don't help our perceptions, when they paint youth to be disengaged and surly, with their faces hidden behind smart phone screens. But I guarantee you, the more you get to know them, the more you will realize just how similar their thoughts and feelings are to yours when you were that age, even if the circumstances are a little different. Besides, what they actually need from adults are a listening ear, a little of your time, encouragement, and curiosity. All of us are equipped to offer these sorts of gifts.

Did I lower a few barriers for you? Good! Let's have a phone call or meet for coffee to talk more! Shoot me an email to set up a time: [bcarroll@hopechurchrca.org](mailto:bcarroll@hopechurchrca.org)



## Through My Wheelchair's Eyes

by Karen [Always Grateful for the Lessons Hidden in Adversity] Van Doorne, Caring for Creation

This past March I had a new experience: lying low. I was confined to a wheelchair for two-and-a-half months while I waited for a fractured ankle to heal. My physical view was different, yes, but there was also something more. Forced to slow down, I began to notice other things:

- The warped trim on the kitchen window
- My favorite book on a shelf right in front of my nose
- The philosophy of Shipt.com
- Discomfort with our consumption of plastic products

While seated for so long and with lots of time to think, I became more aware of my fast-paced and productive life. I had been unconsciously rationalizing away my “environmental footprint”—anything to get me back into my world of the art and science of audiology, a most enjoyable profession. I was moving at the speed of sound and had nestled into my comfort zone, paying little attention to my consumption of available products and not going out of my way to make a difference.

Rationalization was easy. I used to think to myself, “We are America. Everything comes in plastic; surely, I could use it. It’s a cultural thing, right? It only comes this way. I’m just going with the flow of our society. What could I do anyway?”

My two-and-a-half month journey taught me some lessons:

- That God is always with me no matter what dumb things I do
- Awareness of how I roll as a human being
- Appreciation for the space I occupy on this planet

Because getting to the grocery store was problematic, my watershed moment of clarity about plastics came with my first order from Shipt.com. I had ordered \$52 of mostly produce—ginger, red pepper, squash, and asparagus. Each vegetable came wrapped in its own individual plastic bag.

I had seventeen bags of plastic for a bunch of veggies. Seventeen! And while I was very glad the nice person who brought my groceries offered to recycle the bags for me, I felt overwhelmed by the excess. She explained that people

like to have their vegetables “not touching.” Shipt.com has developed this marketing approach to make people happy.

But I wasn’t happy. I went from feeling good about recycling to wondering why I use this service in the first place. It took energy to create the plastic bag, energy to transport the bag, and energy to recycle it. And after some research, I learned that **only 9 percent of plastic is actually recycled**. Why not just be mindful of how to replace that plastic bag with reusables? **Every. Time.**

I decided to make a change. Now my mobile self is moving forward with glass jars for storage, buying products without plastic as much as possible, a life without Ziplocs and Glad containers (this is a learning curve but doable), and a new awareness of what I actually can do to make a difference. And I did make a phone call to Shipt.com corporate!

I was embarrassed that I didn’t research better ways to move on this earth sooner, but I am here now, and I will do a better job. It’s surely not as convenient, but I suspect the tipping point of convenience vs. sustainability is the topic of another conversation.



# Connecting with One Another

## Gratitude

Handrails were recently installed along the chancel steps and in the prayer chapel to make it easier and safer for members and friends using those steps. Thanks to Clare Heyboer for providing design and production assistance, and to regular Habitat for Humanity volunteers Jerry Boss, Jim Deur and Bill VanAuken for assistance in installing the handrails.

~Ben Sikkink, Hope Church  
Building Administrator

Heartfelt gratitude to the Hope church family for your support in the September 29 project to increase awareness of Circles at Hope Church and of the work of Tamar DeJong in India and Jane VanEs in Kenya.

Since the 2009-2010 year, Circle One has stayed in touch with a community of women in Bodi, India, led by Tamar DeJong. There have been problems for the women and their children that we have kept in prayer and have helped with donations. This was originally brought to Circle One's attention through a project of the Reformed Church called Sister Share. So many from Hope Church helped us on Sunday: Pastors Jill Russell, Gordon Wiersma, and also Megan Arevalo and Alex Faga, all the Hope Church family who stopped by and, of course, members of Circle One who did so many things in preparation. We had a total of \$1193.09 in income from sales and \$48.87 in donations. All donations from the sales will go to India.

~Norma Killilea for Circle One



We are grateful we had the opportunity to participate with you in many ways during our 15 years in Holland, and to receive your loving care during Dick's medical crises. Knowing Jill and Gordon were as near as the phone was a strong comfort for us. And the many long distance cards, calls, and care from so many others held us during critical times. Dick's tests continue to show his cancer shrinking, his brain is clear, and his kidney function is normal.

We would love to keep in contact. We are now participating at Portland Mennonite Church (could be Hope Church's twin). With loving gratitude,  
~Dick and Norma Noordijk

Your generosity, sacrifice and willing heart is greatly appreciated. Your blueberry pie sale was over and beyond what we expected for the black scholarship fund. Your act of kindness has been displayed openly for the work that God

has commissioned for us to do. We truly appreciate you and the entire body of Christ at Hope Church. We are so blessed with your continued partnership. This is truly a demonstration of your commitment to our future. Together.

Always together,  
~Pastor Denise and the MAMily  
(Maple Avenue Ministries)

Thank you, thank you for all you do for Hope College! Your support of CASA and of the Diversity Scholarship Fund are so appreciated. And you invest in our staff, faculty, and students in so many ways—thank you for your partnership and being a great neighbor to us! All the best,  
~Sabina DeWitt, Donor  
Relations Development Director  
on behalf of Hope College

Many thanks to all the thoughtful friends at Hope Church during the time of Hank's death. I appreciate your kindness.  
~Ruth Hoekstra

# Poetry Corner

Hosted by Randy Smit and Rhonda Edgington

This month we are blessed to have contrasting Advent pieces by two poets who are no strangers to Hope Church or our Poetry Corner. While circling around similar themes, it's fascinating to see how differently Randy and Francis approach their subject matter. Perhaps one or the other will speak more to you, or maybe they will each touch a different place inside you.

I will also take this opportunity to draw your attention to the still-new live Poetry Corner, which has taken up residence in the Gathering Area, between the Library shelves and the office window. We plan (approximately monthly) to feature a poem that has been brought to our attention by other poetry-loving members of Hope Church. November's selection was added to our Poetry Hat last spring, and seems appropriate for this month of darkness and cold.

-Rhonda

*Each autumn it seems there comes a moment when I'll get out to be with nature on a walk down the bike path and I'll get that cold blast straight off the lake – and it's a crabby angry cold broken howling frozen force pressing, it seems, straight against me. I'll routinely have the same thought fly into my head: What did I do to you? Fierce nature, the many ministries of "her" way with mortals that are less than tender and gentle, does its own work all in the fullness of time. If you are alive in this creation, I say, it's all personal; and not without its splendid awakenings from gloom to glory.*

-Randy

## INTO LATE NOVEMBER

by Randy Smit

Torn wind, trees thrown round holler and howl the dunes  
down in a rush at the ravens startled cry: Why, Why?  
Outside there is fullness in a black night without stars.  
If I am not, before I dress, a love of the night, an empty and  
a native prayer, I haven't a wonder, a way.  
Which is why of her Holy feet today, (play the wooden flute, her courses)  
wild turkeys these and I have only left this dream, unless next  
day some glimmer of diamond light may touch a stream  
at its moldering edges with gusty nudges, while the  
laurels smile to the dawn pure in thorn and snowdrop.  
Stop, I say Wait – again, too soon deep snows at purple dusk will blow,  
northern drums thunder and sound on, 'til pressed from vacancy  
a deeper ground yearns toward a brighter star, behind the gale  
the spark ignites and sets aglow the new and ancient trail  
feathered heralds fly some  
miles abroad: Love shall prevail.  
Prepare the way, prepare the way.



This Advent hymn (to the tune of “Halifax” if you wish to sing it) asks us to remember the coming of the Christ, imagining ourselves in the plight of those still waiting for the coming, honestly confronting how we and the world are, and hoping for the many gifts Christ’s coming brings if we are open to Them.



#### Advent Hym

by Francis Fike

(taken from his 2019 publication, Dune Tracks)

In darkness baffled, we are lost,  
And wander in the night,  
All of our paths are evil-crossed.  
Come to us, Lord of Light,  
For here we stumble and despair  
Left to our strength alone.  
Sorrow and failure everywhere  
Now chill us to the bone.

The winter night is long and cold  
And darker than a tomb,  
But not as dark as hearts that hold  
For you no vacant room.  
The darkness deepens, and the night  
Surrounds us: where is dawn?  
Come to us, Lord of lasting Light;  
Our feeble flame is gone.

Taught by the prophet’s joyful Word,  
We bide a savior’s birth.  
Prepare us for your coming, Lord,  
To this, the fallen earth.  
Come to the terror-troubled land  
Where always war draws near  
And evil spreads on every hand  
Its ministries of fear.

Thaw out the nearly frozen heart  
With warm, incarnate love;  
Reveal your precious healing art  
In flight of Holy Dove,  
And bring to all the weary earth  
The power to love and cope;  
To us upon your day of birth  
Bring joy and peace and hope.

# Hospitality at the Communion Table

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by Pastor Gordon Wiersma

As Advent begins, our worship services will include many familiar pieces in our liturgy that shape this season of preparation—candles, dance, music, and litanies. In the 11 a.m. service, as we follow the pattern of celebrating communion on the first Sunday of Advent, we will also begin a new pattern of including our children from Children in Worship. This new pattern results from a number of discussions among the Elders, Pastors, Worship Ministry, and Christian Education Ministry.

The Elders and Pastors' discussion included the desire for the celebration of communion to be a time of hospitality for all who have gathered for worship. Part of our Reformed tradition—and of many other Christian traditions—has been to have many rules to control who receives communion. There have been theological reasons for these rules, but they have often been applied in problematic ways. With work from my Doctor of Ministry program as a catalyst, the Pastors and Elders talked about the foundation of “God’s grace” from our Reformed tradition as calling us toward the communion table as a place where all are welcomed to be nourished by the presence and grace of Jesus Christ. Faith and baptism, doctrine and membership, age and understanding—these are all important aspects of how we organize our congregational life. But the Elders and Pastors wanted to express that at the communion table, none of these things should issue or deny an invitation to the feast of life.

Everyone present for worship is a guest at the communion table, and all who wish to respond to the invitation to be nourished by God’s grace in Jesus Christ are welcome at the table. You’ll notice what is now spoken and printed in our liturgy, revised by the Elders and Pastors, fully and consistently expresses this grace of hospitality.

As the Worship Ministry was aware of these Elder/Pastor discussions, they recognized another aspect of hospitality to address, which was the elements themselves. For quite some time, Hope Church has provided a gluten-free option for communion bread. This has been a good expression of hospitality, but having separate elements was not ideal in form or function. A new, locally baked bread was located of which nearly all can partake, and this has been introduced to our worship—both 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.—as a further expression of hospitality in our celebration of communion.

In the midst of these efforts toward radical (complete and enthusiastic) hospitality, the Christian Education Ministry discussed the mismatch between our intentions to welcome children to receive communion and our provision of opportunities to receive it. We brainstormed how best to support families with younger children to have the opportunity to celebrate communion as part of the congregation. On December 1, we will start a new pattern of bringing the children into the sanctuary to share in



communion with the rest of the congregation. We are working out good logistics for this, yet it still will surely involve some measure of “holy hubbub”—but such is the beautiful hospitality of a meal that our Lord invites us all to share together to be nourished by God’s grace. This new pattern is giving us good opportunities to talk with our children more deeply about communion—including the new bread!—and it is also an opportunity for all of us to be renewed in the radical hospitality that is at the heart of our communion celebration.

The Pastors and Elders would be glad to have further conversation about all of this holy hospitality and grace, just ask. And I invite you to look forward with Advent anticipation to this new communion pattern on December 1, as we more fully embody the hospitality of God’s grace for all at the communion table.

Peace,  
Pastor Gordon