



SALT & LIGHT

a hope church publication

LENT 2020



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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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EDITORIAL & DESIGN

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Into the Light:

“Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah” Psalm 32:5

Have you ever buried a regret or secret so deep into your psyche that it almost takes on a life of its own? A white lie you told your spouse in order to keep the peace now feels like a chasm of regret. That “joke” you told your friends in ninth grade at the expense of your classmate with terrible acne; the classmate you didn’t see standing right near you until you were all done laughing. Thirty years later, you still are filled with guilt for how badly you hurt him.

Have you then ever had the experience of confessing that regret aloud to a friend, a pastor, a therapist, or even to the person you hurt? While there is usually some restorative work that needs to be done to make the relationship right, the relief you also experience is incomparable. Like you just put down a heavy chain around your neck. Confession also puts the gravity of sin in its proper place. It was hurtful to you and another, but you can’t believe you worked so hard at hiding it all this time. Confession teaches you are a beloved person who sins, not an ugly sinner underserving of love. You see that even when you do something that defies your values that it doesn’t diminish your value or the love others have for you. In some cases, your confession might even enable others to love you more deeply.

Lent this year will be an exploration of taking what is hidden, both personally and communally, and bringing it into the light. Introspection is hard and vulnerable but the fruits in learning just how deeply we are loved and the revelation of just how much disconnection we have tolerated in our relationships far outweigh the discomfort and fear associated with sharing. There will be different ways for our church community to practice introspection: Wednesday evening services, devotionals, and our Sunday worship. We will all get an opportunity to grow in our understanding of God’s abiding love, mercy, and reconciliation offered to us. Explore each of these opportunities in the following pages. Choose which best fits your personality and time constraints. Then, as the recovery idiom states, “Let go and let God.” – Pastor Beth

Exploring through Lent

Early Worship

For the season of Lent, Early Worship will explore one or two verses of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-11) each week along with a selected Psalm, piece of classical music, and poem by Mary Oliver that reflect the Beatitude verse of that week. Our services will also include prayers that focus on Beatitude themes from *Praying With the Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace*, by John Philip Newell. Everyone is welcome.

Mardi Gras Celebration/ Shrove Tuesday, February 25

6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Join in the fun for all ages! Mardi Gras celebrations are traditionally a time of last-chance merrymaking before the disciplines of Lent. Everyone of all ages is invited to enjoy a pancake dinner and to participate in 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!

Ash Wednesday, February 26

6:00 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. Worship

Sign up in the Gathering Area to attend the dinner! You can also sign up to help with set-up (starting at 5 p.m.) and clean-up. 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.

Wednesday Evening Lenten Worship Services

March 4, 11, 18

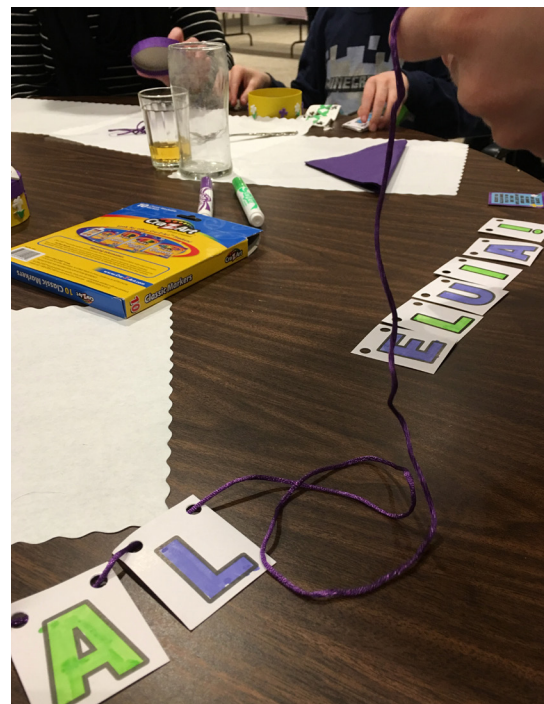
7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Meeting in the Chapel, the services will be contemplative times of evening prayer, incorporating music and scripture. We use resources from the Iona and Taizé Communities to enrich our worship. All are invited.

Healing Prayer Service Sunday, March 15

11:00 a.m.

A healing prayer service will be part of our 11:00 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary. The liturgy 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 blessings 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.



Worship during Holy Week

Palm Sunday Celebrations April 5

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

11:00 a.m. "Worship for the Way of the Cross"

We begin the journey through Holy Week with dramatic reading, liturgical dance, and music.

Maundy Thursday

**Seder Dinner, April 9
6:00 p.m. Dinner**

7:45 p.m. "Light in the Deepest Night" Service

The Seder is a traditional Jewish meal that remembers the events of the Passover told in the book of Exodus. There will be a potluck meal as part of the Seder so please bring a dish to pass. Sign up for the Seder in the Gathering Area or by calling the church office at (616) 392-7947.

The "Light in Deepest Night" liturgy is drawn from the writings of Christian mystic Julian of Norwich, who lived and wrote in fourteenth-century Britain. Through choral settings, scripture, songs, prayer and reflection, the "Light in Deepest Night" liturgy on Maundy Thursday draws us to hear these themes of

God's all-encompassing love and grace in the passion story of Jesus Christ. Read more in the sidebar (right).

Community Good Friday Service, April 10

12:00 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church

First Presbyterian Church will host a community ecumenical Good Friday service, in cooperation with several downtown Holland congregations: Hope Church, First United Methodist, Third Reformed, Holland UCC, Grace Episcopal, First Presbyterian, and Calvary Reformed. The liturgy of scripture, song and prayer will be led by participants from the various congregations.

Easter Sunday, April 12

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

9:40 a.m. Easter Brunch
Please bring a breakfast item to share!

**11:00 a.m.
Worship Service**
Celebrate the Risen Lord! Pastor Jill Russell, preaching, and Pastors Gordon Wiersma and Beth Carroll, liturgists; with choirs and brass under the direction of Brian Carder. Church School will not be held.

Maundy Thursday: "Light in Deepest Night"

Many who have attended Maundy Thursday evening worship services during Holy Week, at Hope Church or elsewhere, are accustomed to a "Tenebrae" service as the liturgical form of the service. The Tenebrae pattern is a meaningful liturgy that will continue to be used at Hope Church, but this year our Maundy Thursday worship will have a different pattern.

A Tenebrae service typically follows a pattern of scripture readings that progress through the passion of Jesus toward his crucifixion, with candles extinguished one by one until only the light of the Christ candle remains. The theme for this year's Maundy Thursday service, "Light in Deepest Night," may sound like just such a Tenebrae pattern, but it follows a different form. The "Light in Deepest Night" liturgy is drawn from the writings of Christian mystic Julian of Norwich, who lived and wrote in fourteenth-century Britain. Julian's works have blessed generations, as she uses evocative images of faith, God, and life, expressing a vision of all things held in God's love and grace. Through choral settings, scripture, songs, prayer and reflection, the "Light in Deepest Night" liturgy draws us to hear these themes of God's all-encompassing love and grace in the passion story of Jesus Christ.

This is a year at Hope Church when our Palm Sunday worship takes us through the Scripture texts of Holy Week, from the triumphal entry to Jerusalem to the agony of the cross. We do this through the creative reading "Worship for the Way of the Cross" which has been used a number of times at Hope Church, most recently in 2017. Having experienced the Holy Week story together on Palm Sunday, the "Light in Deepest Night" liturgy will be an opportunity to bring whatever "deepest night" is present in our lives and world before the Light of God which cannot be extinguished. All are invited to join in worship together for Maundy Thursday, as a faithful voice from our past nurtures us on our Holy Week journey.

Invitations to Fellowship and Growth

Adult Education Offerings

Adult Education brings you opportunities for spiritual formation through biblical study and critical examination of cultural, social, and moral issues from a Christian perspective. Join us in the Commons on Sunday mornings from 9:40 to 10:40 a.m.

That Far? Why?

Four Hope Church members have recently traveled many miles to provide human services and participate in mission activities. They will each tell why they did so and what they experienced.

February 23 - Ann McKnight went 9,640 miles round trip to Bosnia, the complicated epicenter of Europe, the raw edge where East meets West. Ann works with the RCA via the Jericho Foundation in that very special place on our globe.

March 1 - Dan Fisher and Kay Hubbard travelled 17,280 miles to HoChiMinh, Vietnam to visit their adopted son David's biological relatives 14 years ago. Now their focus is on children, usually orphans, with HIV/AIDS and their caretakers in Vietnam.

March 8 - Sam Martin goes 14,320 miles to the village of Martinpur in the Province of Pakistan where Sam's great grandparents were missionaries in the late 1800s.

Answering Tough Questions

Jim Brownson will lead a class for four weeks from March 15 through April 5, covering some of the material from his forthcoming book, tentatively entitled *Answering Tough Questions*, to be published by Eerdmans:

- **Politics:** Why should I be a Christian when I

find the political agenda of many Christians so offensive? Matthew 22

- **Other Religions:** What makes Jesus any more important than Mohammed, Gandhi, or Buddha? John 1:1-18
- **Spirituality:** I'm "spiritual but not religious," meaning that I care about spiritual issues, but have no time or energy for religious practices. Romans 12
- **Atrocities:** Why should I trust the Bible when it's been used to justify atrocities throughout history? I Corinthians 5:9-13

Dr. Brownson will explore how the relevant biblical text both reframes and refocuses each question, and also begins to answer it. Come prepared to explore!

Learning and Hog Wild with the Brim Bunch

On February 20, Deborah Schakel will share at the Brim Bunch gathering the story of Lida Rogers, which explores the life of this Holland biology teacher who was instrumental in both the planting of Keppel Forest and the early days of Holland's Tulip

Time Festival. If you knew Lida (or had her as a teacher), please come and share your stories. We'll all have a good time, with a meal catered from Hog Wild BBQ (vegetarian and gluten-free options available) and a lively presentation. Tickets are \$10 per

person; sign up online or on the sign up sheets in the Gathering Area by Sunday, February 16. All are invited.



Plan for Low Carbon Sunday and Outdoor Events

By Bruce Ten Haken, Creation Care Ministry member

Creation Care Ministry is planning a Low Carbon Sunday for April 19. We're giving advance notice so we as a congregation can plan ways individually and collectively to reduce our carbon footprint. Whether we

ride our bikes, walk, or carpool, every effort will contribute to reducing the carbon emissions we normally produce. Start forming a plan for worshipping together with an empty parking lot and a full sanctuary! More

details will be provided as we approach the date in the bulletin and on the church website.

You'll find more opportunities under the Caring for Creation heading on the information

board in the Gathering Area. A few outdoor opportunities to be aware of at Ottawa County parks are cross-country ski lesson in February at Pigeon Creek Park; Moonlight Night Hike March 6; learning about the night sky March 7; and Wildlife

Encounters March 21. Family fun to consider includes Fireside Story Time, Wonders of Winter, and Tot Time. Winter birding events happen throughout February, March, and April. Grab an Ottawa County Parks newsletter in the Gathering Area.

Mark Family Calendars for Peace Camp June 22 to 26

By Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director



The last few years, Hope Church has supported a summer camp inviting children from the community to come together to learn about peace, practice peacemaking and conflict resolution, and to find ways to spread peace with our neighbors near and far. This year the camp, called "Explore a Path of Peace," will be held at First Presbyterian Church in Holland June 22 to 26.

As this camp has developed, we have strived to include and encourage a diverse group of children. The camp is for children entering first through sixth grades, with opportunities for older children to become assistants. The program will be

from 9:00 to 11:45 a.m. at no cost to participants. The morning session includes music, games, and crafts, including making and walking a labyrinth, that will help us will help us be peacemakers and experience peace.

Optional afternoon sessions, for a small fee, including lunch and an adventure are still under consideration. Information will be available in the Gathering Area and sent to families. Interested in being part of this experience? Any questions? Contact Jocelyn Van Heest at jvanheest@hopechurchrca.org.

Campers and leaders had a wonderful camp last summer as we learned together how to make a difference in the world by making peaceful changes in our own lives and sharing those skills with others. Please save the date and invite your friends.

Looking ahead to Children's Sabbath

On Sunday, May 3, we as a congregation promise to nurture and pray in support of the children of Hope Church as well as children with special concerns around the world. To celebrate all children on this Sunday and each day that follows, everyone will have the opportunity to select names of children to support and pray for in the coming year. We'll provide suggestions

for how you can make a meaningful connection to those children through prayer and/or involvement with the family; they'll be available during worship on May 3 and in the Gathering Area for a few weeks after. Our children are a valuable part of our congregation as they share their joy and energy with each of us, and we celebrate them.

Kids Hope:

By Karen Pearson, Hope Church member and President, Kids Hope USA

During a Sunday service in the fall of 2010, Judy VanderWilt described a mentoring program I hadn't heard of before: Kids Hope USA! Despite having two very small children and a part-time role at Hope College, I felt the tug of the Holy Spirit saying, "give it a try...your life has been enriched by so many mentors, it's time to give back!" That fall I became a mentor for a second grader, and this year, I'm a mentor again, building a relationship with a first grader at Vanderbilt Academy. I'm serving alongside a dozen other amazing volunteer mentors and Vicki Rumpsa is doing a great job coordinating the program for Hope Church!

This time becoming a mentor is even more special because I'm the new president of Kids Hope USA. After more than ten years at Hope College, I felt God calling me to servant leadership at Kids Hope USA. I feel well-suited for this role because it combines education, outreach, community service, and faith. The first six months have been an exciting challenge, getting to know this incredible ministry from an insider's perspective.

One of the blessings of these early months is that I've spent time with Virgil Gulker, the founder of Kids Hope USA. Virgil's idea got off the ground in the fall of 1995, when mentors from three churches in the area began mentoring in Holland and Zeeland. Now we're celebrating 25 years of this incredible ministry that has touched the lives of

A Relationship Wrapped in Prayer

many thousands of students and mentors. As Virgil describes it, **Kids Hope is “a relationship wrapped in a prayer!”**

So let me describe those two parts—relationship and prayer—for those of you not familiar with Kids Hope.

First, there’s the one-to-one relationship between a volunteer adult mentor from a church and a student at a local elementary school. The students, all recommended for Kids Hope by their teachers or school counselors, are children for whom the one-to-one attention of a caring adult outside their family would be valuable for their academic, social, and emotional development. The mentors give one hour of their time during the school day, to go to the school and meet with their students. The hour together usually consists of a combination of academic work, reading, playing games, sharing a snack, and doing an art project or a craft. If this sounds pretty simple to you, you’re right, it is! Kids Hope mentoring is not complicated. It’s spending an hour a week pouring attention, encouragement, and fun into the life of a child.

The second part of what makes Kids Hope special is prayer. Each one-to-one relationship between a mentor and a student is blessed with a prayer partner who prays for the mentor and child when they meet and at other times during the week as the spirit leads. Most mentors and prayer partners connect via email, text, or a short phone call to stay updated on the child and how things are going during the mentoring hour. In one of



those Holy Spirit connections, Norma Killilea, who was my prayer partner back on 2010, is my prayer partner again this year! Norma and I exchange information via emails and conversations at church about my student, how he’s doing, and how she can be praying for as we get to know each other.

According to Norma, she’s a prayer partner because “It is so easy for us, to pray and assist our own children and grandchildren.” But Norma feels called to pray for others, even those she doesn’t know well. She prays for my student and me because she knows that this hour of mentoring can have a huge impact on this child’s life. Norma is reminded of examples in the Bible of how persistent prayer gains a response. Consistent prayer is one of the keys to success for Kids Hope USA! When

Norma consistently lifts us up in prayer, she is reminding me how special my child is and how much God loves him! That encourages me to be more patient, more loving, let go of expectations and just embrace the moment. Having her pray for us makes our time together more special and fun! Norma says, “Being a Prayer Partner is a GIFT!”

So, if you’ve wondered how you might use an hour of your time to make a big difference in this world, look no further: Kids Hope needs you! As Jesus said to his first disciples, I say to you, “Come and see!” Come and see how your life and your faith can be even more full of fun and meaning by joining the ministry of Kids Hope USA. Find Vicki Rumpsa or me after church, or check out the Kids Hope bulletin board in the Gathering Area for more information.

Connecting with One Another



Many thanks for the multiple ways in which Marlin and I experienced your care over these past days, months, and years. I am grateful for the messages of support and healing at the time of Marlin's death. Plus, I appreciate all the ways in which the church staff and friends helped to make a celebration of Marlin's life a special time of remembrance for me and my family. Additionally, I would add that the St. Nicholas banner brightened Marlin's room

at Resthaven. And the warmth of the Christmas carolers' visit was lovely; the beautiful poinsettia and yummy cookies brightened our days, too. Finally, thanks for the many visitors and prayers offered on Marlin's behalf. We both felt so blessed to be part of this community of faith over these many years.

With gratitude,
Judy VanderWilt

I would send you this email to pass our Christmas Greetings to you and Hope Church brothers and sisters. We would not be able to pass the last couple of years without your presence and support. We love you and thank you for demonstrating God's love to us in the journey that makes us feel absent. God's blessings to each and every one of you in Hope Church!

- Rode Molla and Endrias Assen

Rode and Endrias are from the Ethiopian Lutheran Church, and joined us at Hope Church while Rode attended Western Seminary. Hope Church has continued to provide support as Rode has continued his studies; they seek to return to Ethiopia to provide holistic support to women and children.

Thanks to everyone for the wonderful caring support for Michael (and me). We are so fortunate to have such a caring church family. Michael was very moved by the caroling, poinsettia and cards—we read them together.

- Michael and Kathy Henry
P.S. Michael very much enjoys the visits!

Thank you so much for the generous gift of gift cards for our clients this Christmas. It is always such a blessing to be able to see our clients' faces when we are able to give them something to lighten the financial burden in the Holiday Season. Your faithfulness over the years in this giving has blessed many. Thank you for partnering with us in this again this year.

Dillene Van Beek, Good Samaritan
Volunteers Coordinator

That Community Kitchen!

By Earl Laman



You've heard of it! Hope Church has been part of its everyday mission since 1991. It operates as a coordination including Community Action House, Western Seminary (in its kitchen and Commons), and 15 churches that provide volunteers of help prepare, serve, and clean up every weekday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. A brunch is served Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Healthful and filling foods and drinks have always been served through the years, but the past year Felicia Thompson, a social worker and certified cook who grew up on the south side of Chicago, has led the way to the best in nutrition, fulfillment, food quality, and variety!

Through years we serve a wide variety of people in need of good food, but more recently the 100 to 200 people served daily are mostly people in the "margin" with many basic limitations and needs. They are served much more than a "soup kitchen" could.

The hands and heart of those who have served this past year on Hope Church days as a regular or back-up person are: Barbara Bouma, Dave Schmitt, Gerry Van Heest, Linda McFadden, Barbara and Dan Joldersma, Marilee and Milt Nieuwsma, Cherie Versendaal, Earl Laman, Barb Schmitt, Lisa Denison, Sue Newton, Janet Elzinga, Sharon Arendshorst, John Tysse, Bert Duinkerken, and Rhonda Edgington.

Inaugural Hope Church Art Show!

When the Hope Church facilities were renovated in 2016, a central goal was for Hope Church to be a space that supported the vibrant life and abundant gifts of our congregation. Part of that goal was carried out through attentiveness to how the visual arts could be presented at Hope Church. This resulted in one of the main walls in the Gathering Area being a focal point for regular display of visual arts throughout the liturgical year. In addition, there are spaces throughout the facility that are able to accomodate display of visual arts. The Art Committee is working to utilize this capacity beyond the Gathering Area by installing hardware throughout our building. And with that installation soon complete, we're prepared for this joyous announcement.

The Art Committee has been listening to the people of Hope Church, and are responding with the first Hope Church Art Show! There are many talented artists within the Hope Church community, and this will be a way for them to display their gifts, as well as a way for the community to appreciate and celebrate the talent and gifts within our church. The plan is for members and friends to submit their artwork, which will hang within Hope Church for the months of June through August. In addition, the Art Show will honor the artwork of Betty Gordon, a Hope Church artist who died in 2018. A bequest from Betty's estate made possible the hanging systems throughout the church, and we thank Betty's daughter at Hope Church, Marilee (Milt) Nieuwsma, for collaborating on this project.

Guidelines for submissions

1. Each artist may submit two pieces of two-dimensional art. One or two of these will be displayed, depending on size and available space. For this show, we are accepting only two-dimensional work, primarily due to our lack of appropriate space and devices for the safe display of three-dimensional art.

2. Art must be dry, framed, and ready to hang. Sawtooth hangers will not be accepted. If wired, wires much be attached to art with
- eye brackets or D-rings large enough to be used with our hanging system. If brackets or D-rings are not already on your art, the Art Committee will attach them.

3. Because of our space limitations, to be accepted art must be no larger than three feet by four feet.

4. Each piece of art must have the following form completed and attached to the back of the art at the time of submission.

5. **Art may be submitted from May 3 to 17**

Artist Name

Phone Number

Title of Work

Medium

Artist Name

Phone Number

Title of Work

Medium





Doors

By Bob Luidens

I couldn't physically hear the voice intoning it, but I sensed the message nonetheless. And it resonated with a paradoxical truth that was both surprising and energizing: *"Just because this door has been closed for you, Bob, doesn't mean it can't be used by someone else."*

It had been a few days since I took the call on my cell phone while walking the dog, of all things. The Senior Transplant Coordinator of the University of Wisconsin Hospital's transplant surgery program had called to inform me I would in fact not be allowed to donate my kidney on behalf of my beloved friend Dick Otterness, retired RCA pastor and missionary. A week earlier in Madison, I had spent nine hours undergoing a well-honed series of tests—x-rays, CT scans, cardiac stress, blood, psych evaluation, and such—for the purpose of determining my fitness for possible donation. Though not a medical concern to me personally, tests had unfortunately revealed that the arterial structure serving my two kidneys would make surgical transplant too problematic for the surgeons.

Subsequent to taking that unanticipated—and

depression-inducing—call from the coordinator, I phoned Dick to inform him. He and I conveyed to each other our profound disappointment that I would not be able to donate. At the end of our quiet conversation, though, he indicated he would welcome my being part of the growing effort, wonderfully led by his daughters, to seek out potential donors nationwide. I responded that I would of course do whatever I could.

Now, with a few days having passed since my phone exchange with Dick, I sensed that message: *"Just because this door has been closed for you, Bob, doesn't mean it can't be used by someone else."*

Oh.

Within a short time, I realized what my new task was—and is—meant to be. Though not able to donate myself, I was—and am—able to share a personal account of what it might entail for any others to give prayerful consideration to donating a kidney, be it to or on behalf of Dick, or to or on behalf of the countless others nationwide who are on the national registry of potential kidney transplant reception. Though the "transplant door" may not be open for me to use, I'm now in a position to

point to that same door, and even to speak firsthand about what the extensive evaluation process entails, not to mention what surgery and recovery might look like. My prayer now is to be used by God to bring the need for potential living donors to step forward and consider enrolling in the evaluation process. Though I may not be permitted to walk through that door myself, I may be one amongst many who can personally point to that door, explain what lies on the other side, and even help to open that door for another.

If you—or anyone else you know—may be in a position to consider being a living donor, I would urge you to give prayerful consideration to doing so. I would warmly welcome you to contact me (rluidens@yahoo.com or 616 796-8213), or Hope Church parish nurse Ginger Clark, and we'll be humbly honored to answer questions, give you detailed information, and then—if desired—help you make contact with the University of Wisconsin or any of a multitude of transplant centers nationwide.

You may well discover a door through which it may be right to walk on behalf of those in profound need.

Movin' On: Easing Transitions with Muscle & Heart

By Jon Osborn

Most of us have had the experience of moving residences once or perhaps several times. To make that happen, we usually save up money, borrow a truck, mobilize family and friends, and, over the course of a few days, wrestle our belongings to our new residence. When we arrive, we often unpack and reorganize for days, months, or longer before we're settled. All of that comes with an emotional cost. Moving has been rated as one of the top ten stressors in modern life. It's a huge undertaking. No wonder we're exhausted after a move!

Now imagine facing the necessity of having to move with little or no support. No money for a truck rental, no social circle to embrace you with their help. That move may well be coupled with an eviction notice, which would make moving even more stressful and exhausting.

Movin' On is a simple concept to help with the complexities of moving for people who have few resources. The way it works is that Movin' On gets the name and address of one client family from a social service agency or church. To begin, we are assisting one family per month.

At the appointed date, a team of six to eight church volunteers will show up at the client's residence. We carefully load all of the client's household items and

move them in our rental truck to the new residence (within 20 miles). We unload the truck and get the items to the appropriate room of the house. If time allows, we help the client assemble beds, hook up televisions, and unpack. The volunteers and clients break for a sandwich lunch partway through the move.

Four churches are currently on board with this plan. We may or may not know the person carrying the other end of the mattress we're moving, but it might be good to meet someone new! For the time being, the churches involved have agreed to, in partnership, rent the truck and buy the lunches. All we need is volunteer muscle, brains, and heart!

If things go smoothly, this should be a four-to-six hour Saturday

job. By the time we're done, we hope our client is moved and well on the way to feeling settled. That's something we would want for ourselves on moving day and something we can offer to our client family. We would want to offer the same compassion and respect we naturally give our own family members.

Yes, we could use your help sorting, lifting, carrying, and encouraging. But if you're a person who doesn't feel you can lift and carry, there still is a place for you! We could use some administrative help. We would love your assistance!

At the end of the day, we want our client family to feel satisfied, peaceful, and hopeful. We at Movin' On would love to be a part of that optimistic outlook. Hope you can join us!





The Pull of Reconciliation and Justice

Pastor Jill Russell

As I write this, we are halfway through the Season of Reconciliation and deep into Lent planning. It seems we are forever living in multiple seasons like this as worship planners. I'm actually grateful for this intermingling of themes as we live in one season and plan for the next, because that is pretty much what life is like. We may assign the theme of waiting to the season of Advent but find the wisdom of what it takes to live with the unknown and the not-yet hitting us in the middle of the summer. So I trust you'll forgive me if I keep reflecting on reconciliation in what is to be the Lenten issue of *Salt and Light*!

In particular, I wanted to reflect on why a season that we call reconciliation has in recent years come to include so much emphasis on issues of justice and equity. On a superficial level, it may seem like these two themes are at odds. They can certainly

pull from different emotional fields. For those who are comfortable with life as it is, it can feel upsetting and unsettling to venture into topics like mass incarceration as we did one year or race in America as we have done this year. Talk of justice and equity can call to mind the energy of a fiery prophet, whereas talk of reconciliation and restoration can call to mind the gentle spirit of a peacemaker.

You may recall that during my sabbatical in 2015 I did some reading and further reflection on the work of reconciliation. I wanted to understand how these themes of justice and reconciliation connected and why sometimes it felt like they were at odds even if the endgame was the same. I remember very clearly after I returned from my sabbatical and began preaching again that one of our elders commented to me that I was leaning more into the realm of

the prophet after my sabbatical. I suspect it was because of that

“Talk of justice and equity can call to mind the energy of a fiery prophet, whereas talk of reconciliation and restoration can call to mind the gentle spirit of a peacemaker.”

deep dive. We can sometimes associate the idea of peacemaking

with making everything pleasant and comfortable, especially if we define peace as an absence of tension or conflict. Martin Luther King, Jr., speaks of this in his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* when he says: “My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word ‘tension.’ I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of *constructive, nonviolent* tension which is necessary for growth.” [emphasis mine.]

Genuine peace and true reconciliation require an honest grappling with what has disrupted the bonds of connection in the first place. You can’t get to restoration without first probing the dynamics of injustice. We get this all the time when talking about restorative circles. People wonder how you can keep the conversation from escalating out of control if you invite participants to dive so deeply into what went wrong. “How do you keep it calm?” someone asked in our facilitator training last week. And our response is “We don’t!” We aren’t trying to keep a lid on the conflict. We are trying to open

“You can’t get to restoration without first probing the dynamics of injustice.”

it all up so that people can really hear one another. Because only

after we can hear and understand what is truly broken between us, do we have any hope of finding a path forward that can bring

Jesus’s teaching and healing ministry moved between these polarities all the time: calling the powerful to relinquish their privilege and inviting the vulnerable to claim their dignity.

about genuine reconciliation. This work isn’t about playing nice or smoothing things over. These are often fierce conversations where hard truths are spoken and painful realizations are brought to the fore.

The Presbyterian Church USA has an observance they call Peace with Justice Sunday. When I think about what it takes to commit ourselves to the ministry of reconciliation, this is exactly what it includes: peace with justice. After all, Jesus’s teaching and healing ministry moved between these polarities all the time: calling the powerful to



relinquish their privilege and inviting the vulnerable to claim their dignity. He preached with the fire of the prophet and he connected people with the spirit of a peacemaker and all of this was part and parcel of his work of reconciliation among us.

As we explore the theme of examination during this season of Lent in our preaching, I hope we will hold a similar tension that the season of reconciliation requires from us. Just as we need to probe what is broken in this world if we ever hope to be part of making things whole again, we need to be willing to risk examination if we want the joy of new life. We cannot have the one without the other. The revealing and addressing of injustice makes way for genuine peace and reconciliation. The probing work of Lenten examination makes way for the transformation and new life of Easter.

I look forward to this Lenten journey and the season of Eastertide that is to follow. I hope you will too.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Jill

Poetry Corner

Hosted by Randy Smit and Rhonda Edgington

Part of the fun of hosting this poetry corner has been seeking out folks from our congregation and beyond to include in this space. We've enjoyed highlighting members and friends with a broad range of experiences. This month's Poetry Corner features Curtis Gruenler, who many of you know teaches in the English Department at Hope and specializes in the Middle Ages. This semester he is [also] co-teaching a course in the new Hope/Western program at the Muskegon Correctional Facility on friendship and community. ~ Rhonda Edgington

I wrote this poem in a poetry writing course I took at the end of my freshman year, when I decided to major in English. It's never been published, and I'm happy for it to appear here (right).

Around the same time, one of the poems I came to love was "God's Grandeur" by Gerard Manley Hopkins (below). It's one of the few poems I've kept consistently in memory over the years since. It's sort of fitting for Lent, and also good for reciting when one finds oneself alone atop the dune at Tunnel Park at sunset. ~ Curtis

God's Grandeur

By Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.



Peter

By Curtis Gruenler

We fished all night and caught nothing. But still
I cast my night once more at his command.
What kind of man is this that by his will
Brings fish beyond my dreams into my hand?

He sits so still above the moving waves,
The eye amid a storm of groping thought.
His crystal words assure me that he paves
A golden road; his summons leaves me caught

Between my life and journeys long, unknown.
I would be with him, share his catch, but he
Can use no fisherman. And on my own
Could I demand his blessings unto me?

Depart from me, O Lord, for I have sinned.
"Fear not and follow me." I hear your call;
I'll cast my life into your sweeping wind.
My world is dust; I give to you my soul.