



SALT & LIGHT

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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

Lois Maassen, Megan Arevalo, & Michael Kolk

Who Is at the Table?

By Beth Carroll, Associate Pastor of Discipleship

Though it was 1992, I still remember an important lesson I learned in my Hope College Resident Assistant training. It was the first time the concept of “inclusion” had been taught to me, and I learned that representation matters. Whether it’s a play, homecoming sign, textbook, college brochure, or anywhere else where pictures of people are present, we notice if our likeness is not included. In fact, one of the complicated parts of representation is that the more you include diversity, the more stark it becomes who is missing. Diversity is vast. We tend to start with racial diversity, but we must also include the gender spectrum, sexual orientations, differing abilities, ages, and more. That is a lot to fit on a college brochure! When you think of it, being prompted to ask who is missing is important. Jesus was always thinking about outsiders. The Good Shepherd said in John 10:16, “I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”

You might be aware that seminarian intern Elliot Weidenaar and I started “Bible Pride,” a Bible study for LGBTQ youth and their allies. This is a place where the theological and experiential lens of LGBTQ folks is prioritized. Sadly, in our greater world, certain marginalized voices have been omitted because their perspectives are labeled sinful, especially in the case of LGBTQ and female-identifying voices. This is an affront to the work of the Holy Spirit. Denying someone’s voice as a commentator or engager of scripture is abusive to the person being marginalized and even damaging to us, because we miss out on their gifts. Recently at High Hopes we talked about how reading the Bible in community is so important. None of us have truth all on our own; we individuals each have a slice of it. Therefore, the more people coming together and studying the Bible, the more slices we have of the pizza of understanding. The writer of 1 Timothy says in 4:13, 14, “Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the *public reading of scripture*, to exhorting, to teaching.” The fruit of the Holy Spirit is manifested through the diverse body of believers.

As we pastors have been talking about justice more, especially from the pulpit, several of you have been great about reminding us about who or even what we are accidentally excluding. A focus on racial and LGBTQ justice is critical, but so is justice engaging age discrimination, ableism, environmental justice, and more. Thank you for caring so much about who is at the table and let us continue the good work of exhorting, teaching, and loving the fullness of creation and all who inhabit it.

~Peace, Pastor Beth

Children's Ministry and You: Wonderings

By Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director



The children spend a lot of time wondering as they respond to the story in the worship centers. We wonder about our favorite part of the story, how someone in the story would feel, whether we've ever done something like that, have we ever felt that way, does something in this story remind you of another story, why did people act that way or say what they said, what would you do in this story, where could this place really be among many others. As I look at this picture, I am reminded that we have not met in the worship centers together for over a church year. As we continue around this church-year circle, I have some wonderings to share.

I wonder:

- Are church families feeling supported as they seek ways to help their children in their spiritual formation?

- What emotions have the children been feeling?
- What new and exciting things have happened in their families?
- Are there times that they missed their friends and leaders at Hope Church?
- Was there a special family activity they did last summer?
- How has school been going for the children *and* their parents?
- Did they find ways to show love and concern for others?

As they went through the church year, I wonder:

- Would they have some other shares and cares to put on the fall tree display?
- Did they enjoy doing the Advent activities (wreath-making, candlelighting, crafts, St. Nicholas visit, pageant, etc.)?
- What was a favorite Christmas memory from this year?

- Is there something new they learned to do during the winter?
- Did they, like so many church members, miss our Shrove Tuesday/ Mardi Gras celebration?
- How did families spend time during Lent to prepare for the celebration of Easter?
- Did they shout ALLELUIA on Easter Sunday?
- How long did it take for the children to eat the candy from the Easter Egg Hunt?
- Did they enjoy the outdoor Easter service and how special was it to see familiar faces?
- Weren't the Zoom family services a wonderful way to worship together and share communion?

And for the congregation:

- Have you held these families in prayer?
- Were you aware that there were over seventy Children in Worship story videos sent to the children—one or two each week—with suggested activities?
- Have you remembered your Prayer PAL?
- Have you missed the opportunity to watch these children grow in spirit?
- Can you think of ways to be involved with these families?

We as a congregation stay connected through prayer, worship and caring for each other. Let's stay connected.

Teens vs. 2020

By Kelly Rosenau, Hope Church Youth

People don't agree on much, but I think we can all agree that historians will probably look back on 2020 as one of those train-wreck years. Personally, I'll never look at toilet paper or the word "unprecedented" in the same way. Everyone has struggled in different ways this past year. As teenagers, we have faced our own unique set of challenges. Many of us are busy with school and extracurriculars. Lots of teens have jobs and are learning to drive. Things like this were halted rather abruptly in March of 2020 for me. What followed was a lot of trying to stay busy and connected, and inevitably, loneliness.

***"If I've learned one thing
from lockdown, it's that
I need people much more
than I thought I did."***

At least in my family, our lives kind of revolve around school and school-related activities, so, when school closed our lives pretty much paused. All of a sudden we went from having a full schedule every day, to having... nothing. In an effort to keep our brains engaged during the rest of the school year, teachers put out optional weekly assignments that we could do to improve our grade in the class. Some teachers had weekly Zoom meetings, some didn't. It was kind of a scramble to finish the year online.

For my part, before shutdown I was dealing with some burnout due to everything I was doing at the time. My older brother (a senior) and I (a freshman) were in our school's musical. We were halfway through our run when we shut down. A week after we shut down, I was supposed to go to New York City with my orchestra class to play in Carnegie Hall. I was initially kind of grateful for the chance

to do nothing. I slept for the first three days of lockdown. After that I tried to keep up with the weekly assignments from teachers, but I was pretty bummed about the musical and the orchestra trip. I had been pouring myself into those things for months and I felt like I didn't have anything else to give. Eventually I sort of shut down. I tried to stay in touch with people at first, but once summer started I stopped reaching out and grew less responsive.

I didn't see a lot of people outside of my COVID bubble, which consisted of my household and my grandma, until July. July was when I took Driver's Ed. That was my first real bit of social interaction since March. We were outside at a park in lawn chairs, but we were in person. Never have I been so excited to see people my own age. Now, at this point I'd basically lost all ability to socialize and didn't remember how to act in a classroom setting. I ended up having a friend in the class, and there was another girl who I kind of knew there. The three of us were all really socially deprived, and I'm surprised the instructor didn't kick us out of the class for all the talking we did about things that weren't driving related (e.g. dinosaur chicken nuggets).

I was kind of giddy after being able to talk like a teenager with other teenagers. In July, youth group met twice to do community service activities. This was also huge for me. While we were working on whatever task it happened to be, Pastor Beth just let us talk about whatever. Again, I think being able to act my age around other people my own age was kind of critical for my (declining) mental health. Up until then I had been feeling really detached and sad, but those activities were really helpful. I don't love in-person school. There are a lot of people who aren't compliant with safety guidelines, especially masking. This frustrates me, but school is where the people are.

If I've learned one thing from lockdown, it's that I need people much more than I thought I did. I need other people my age.

All I Really Want Is a Heavenly Home

By Peter Boogaart, Disability Housing Task Force member



I was asked in 2018 to join our Disability Housing Task Force (DHTF). Years ago, my first real job as a young guy fresh out of college was working for an agency that provided services to adults with disabilities. I spent the next seven years there.

I presumed that this old experience was my link to the DHTF. That proved to be true. What I didn't know then, however, was that housing itself would be such a difficult issue. Finding housing for disabled persons is a big deal and evidently more difficult than "just build something!"

Working with the DHTF exposed me to the challenge of affordable housing throughout our community. If you heard Ryan Kilpatrick's presentation in Adult Education recently, you know that this is a troubling issue for Holland at large.

Housing issues expose a lot of sublimated assumptions about value: property values, aspirational values, social values, security values, and class values.

Whether or not we can articulate our feelings, housing issues reveal our beliefs about what value

looks like. Since 1945, value looks like a private house on a private lot being served by public utilities somewhere in the suburbs. Oh yeah, and that white picket fence. That's the mental picture—usually marketed as the American Dream.

Hard to believe now, but that wasn't always the American Dream. The Dream was largely the creation of post-war federal government policy. Whether you think of Uncle Sam's role in terms of investment or subsidy, highway extensions and sprawling utility lines weren't going to happen on their own. For those of us who grew up with this model, it just seemed normal.

As a member of the DHTF, I have to bring something else to this discussion. We're a faith community. What has faith got to say about value? Or about what I ought to value? Are my intuitive feelings about housing congruent with my values? What's my faith responsibility when I recognize that potential changes in housing policy evoke feelings of fear or insecurity?

I'm all for good debate and creative thinking when it comes to housing policy. And I'm also for caution; you don't throw everything out just because someone has a new idea. Somewhere in the tension between those polarities is a good, workable solution.

I'm willing to say, however, that nobody will find that good solution unless they first recognize where security lies; and it's not in the house. People of faith know that security is based on God's promise—I will never leave you or forsake you.

If you feel secure, it's okay to muddle through different options. It's okay to try something different. There are other models for housing and land use. We could change zoning rules and actually improve neighborhoods. Here's an article that I came across online: "[What We Can Learn from the Skinniest Home in London.](#)" Check it out. It may help you expand your thoughts about how to use our urban spaces.

The Happy Science of Micro-Friendships

By David G. Myers

“No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted.”
~Aesop, *The Lion and the Mouse*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve felt the pain of isolation from our nearest and dearest. But what about the more fleeting social interactions that daily bring us joy? David Myers explores the science of micro connections in an article originally published on [Talk Psych Blog](#).

As Aristotle recognized long ago, we are social animals. “Without friends,” he observed in *Nicomachean Ethics*, “no one would choose to live.” Cut off from friends or family—alone in a foreign land, isolated during a pandemic, or separated by a death—people acutely feel their lost connections. Thanks to our distant ancestors surviving in groups that collectively hunted, shared, and protected, nature has endowed us with a powerful *need to belong*.

Our deeply social nature is revealed by the contribution of social support to our health and happiness. Folks who have close friends—people to whom they freely disclose their ups and downs, who rejoice with them over good news and commiserate over bad—live more happily and longer. In contrast, being ostracized, excluded, or shunned—your texts unanswered, your online friend ghosting you, others avoiding you—causes real emotional and physical pain. Loneliness is less a matter of being alone than of feeling ignored, dismissed, or uncared about. We are designed for relationships.

It’s understandable, then, that with fewer pandemic-era face-to-face meetings, parties, and coffee klatches, people’s mental health has [suffered](#). Separation from our nearest and dearest has taken an emotional toll. But what about those fleeting interactions—a brief chat in passing, a friendly exchange with the mail carrier, a wee blether with the ride share driver? Do these pandemic-diminished micro connections also feed our souls? The consistent verdict of some inspiring social experiments is Yes.

Bantering with a barista. University of British Columbia researchers Gillian Sandstrom and Elizabeth Dunn offered patrons entering Starbucks a \$5 gift card to participate in a simple [experiment](#). After consenting, half were randomly assigned to be respectful but *efficient* when interacting

with the barista (“have your money ready, and avoid unnecessary conversation”). The others were assigned to be *social* (“smile, make eye contact to establish a connection, and have a brief conversation”). When later exiting the store, those assigned to be social reported feeling more positive emotion, less negative emotion, and greater satisfaction with their Starbucks experience.

Reaching out to a stranger. In multiple [experiments](#), University of Chicago researchers Nicholas Epley and Juliana Schroeder similarly offered Chicago commuters a \$5 gift card for completing a randomly assigned task: to a) do as they would normally do on their train or bus, b) sit in solitude, or c) strike up a conversation with a stranger (“try to get to know your community neighbor this morning”). Although most people expected the attempted conversation would be awkward, the surprising outcome was positive—they were in a happier mood upon finishing their ride. Moreover, the intentional friendliness created an equally happy experience for both extraverts and introverts.

The delight of compliments received—and given. In five [experiments](#), University of Pennsylvania researchers Erica Boothby and Vanessa Bohns observed the unexpected power of compliments. In one, they instructed compliment-givers to approach strangers, observe “something about them that you like” (often their hair or clothing), and compliment them on it. Although the compliment-givers expected the compliment-receivers would be a bit put off, perhaps feeling their own awkwardness, the consistent result was the opposite: The little act of kindness was warmly received. Even the compliment-giver felt better afterwards.

Engaging with a bus driver. At Turkey’s Sabanci University, Gül Günaydin and colleagues wondered if greeting, thanking, or expressing good wishes to campus shuttle drivers would boost commuters’



happiness. A survey revealed that those who routinely did so were happier. But maybe happy people are just friendlier? To pin down cause and effect, they experimented. They gave some commuters an envelope with instructions to do as she reports Turks normally do: to not speak with the driver. Others were asked to smile, make eye contact, and say something like “Thank you” or “Have a nice day.” When later hopping off the bus, the friendly-acting commuters were feeling happier.

The moral of the story: “Prosociality” doesn’t just brighten others’ days, it brightens one’s own. When the pandemic ends, and our facial expressions are no longer masked, we will surely savor our renewed connections—even our micro connections.

I wondered: Does the lesson of these studies ring true in my Facebook friends’ everyday lives, as it does in mine? So I asked them: Can you recall happy experiences of humanizing brief interactions—either as giver or as receiver?

Dozens of heart-warming replies flooded in.

Many recalled the happy results of reaching out to homeless people, grocery store clerks, tradespeople, taxi drivers, and fellow hikers, campers, or dog-walkers. Teachers reported, during the pandemic, missing “the short conversations outside of class time—in hallways, in the lunch line, at the door on the way into or out of school... the little blessings [that] enrich my day and my membership in the community.”

Others recalled how, with repeated brief encounters, miniature but meaningful relationships arose. Repeated micro interactions with restaurant servers, corner shop owners, or pharmacists grew into fondness: “On our daily walk past a hotel to our Tokyo train station we got to ‘know’

a friendly bellhop on a first name basis, with updates on her life. She would often run out and wave most enthusiastically greeting us.”

Some noted the prevalence of micro interactions in certain cultures. A friend reported that, in Malawi, “we had grown used to these kinds of micro friendships” as people exchange pleasantries with passersby on the street, and with the vegetable and fruit-sellers. “If they have their babies with them you greet them, too. Eventually you see that the baby is now in school and there is another one on the way, so you feel you have gotten to know them through a series of small exchanges over the years. When we left Malawi to return to the U.S. our daughter noticed the difference. She asked us, ‘Have I disappeared?’ When we asked why, she said, ‘No one greets me!’”

Others were inspired by *observing* micro kindnesses, such as from a spouse who engages in a “spray of random acts and words of kindness”—given to clerks, delivery people, or the adjacent person at a concert “with a smile and chat that leaves them smiling in return.” Another admired a friend who “will often meet someone—perhaps just for a moment—and take the time to tell them something strikingly wonderful about themselves.”

My friends also recalled *receiving* kindhearted gestures from strangers—from a 7-Eleven store owner having dog treats ready, a Red Cross nurse giving infusions with a personal conversation, or a fellow airplane passenger, who, on landing, complimented a mom of three young children. “‘You were very patient.’ Music to my ears and heart.”

One woman, stressed by managing a clinic at the pandemic’s beginning, stopped by Walmart to console herself with “a family-sized bag of chocolate.” The cashier, “a young 20-something man, asked me if I’d come all the way to the store just for chocolate. I said yes, it had been a bad day. He then asked me why and I just burst into tears. His genuine interest and compassion were so validating and humanizing that the flood gates broke. He probably thought he made my day worse... but he really made my day better, and I think I will never forget the kindness of this young guy toward a hot mess 40-something mom.”

Sometimes micro kindnesses are, indeed, long remembered. One man recalled that “When I was a college student, I used to smile and greet the only other dark-skinned Mexican on campus

(a small California college). The other students used to mock him for his [older] age, quirky personality, and appearance. We never had classes together so I never really got to know him. But at graduation he approached me tearfully and thanked me for my frequent smiles and greetings. He told me that often it was the only kindness he would experience for long periods at the college, and that it helped him get through.”

Another told of seeing an older, white-haired man buying roses and chocolates. “I smiled at him and commented, ‘How nice! Someone special will love receiving those on Valentine’s Day.’ He turned to me, made intense eye contact, and said, ‘They are for my wife. I am giving them to her today. We just found out that she has leukemia.’ Then we just

gazed at each other for a few seconds, searching each other’s souls, it felt like. He wanted, needed a response. I asked God for words, and to perceive exactly what he needed. I finally said from my own heart, ‘Every woman dreams of finding someone like you to love her forever, no matter what.’ It happened so fast. The gratitude that swept over his face melted into a smile. He really needed someone to see him and hear him, exactly where he was in that moment, I think. ‘I’ll take good care of her,’ he said as he left, his voice stronger. ‘I know you will,’ I said back, lifting a silent prayer of thanksgiving.”

(For David Myers’ other essays on psychological science and everyday life, visit TalkPsych.com; follow him on Twitter @DavidGMyers.)

Trial by Trauma: Naming Our Present and Framing Our Future

By Bob Luidens, Congregational Care & Health Ministry member

Many if not most of us are experiencing significant stress and trauma at this time. That unarguable reality requires us, I believe, to ask how the stress and trauma are affecting us now and what their long-term impact may be well into the future. In that light, I have found myself reflecting on an exchange I had some years ago with Dr. Smith, a friend and former therapist of mine.

I was sitting in Dr. Smith’s office, having just spent more than an hour spelling out in gut-wrenching detail the immobilizing symptoms I had been experiencing for all too many weeks in the context of my ministerial responsibilities. Those symptoms included, among others, a degrading of my ability to stay focused, an increasing tendency to be overly reactive in relatively benign settings, and a nightly struggle to benefit from anything close to a deep sleep.

Feeling overwhelmed by these disorienting struggles, I had called Dr. Smith, a clinical psychologist who was also a fellow clergyperson. He saw me the next afternoon. During that first hour he listened carefully, gently inviting me to detail both what I had been experiencing in ministry, as well as how those experiences were taking their toll. Once I had spun out as much as I had energy to share

with him, he quietly posed the question/statement: “You know, don’t you, Bob, that you have PTSD?”

My response, betraying how totally unprepared I was for his diagnostic suggestion, was to say, “I was born in Iraq, but I never served there.” I knew about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), given the realities of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. With increasing numbers of servicewomen and men returning from deployment in those besieged lands, PTSD was becoming more and more recognized as a widely occurring reality for tens of thousands of victims. I understood PTSD to be a mental and emotional disorder that is caused by the experience of trauma, such as inevitably occurs in warfare. In fact I had engaged in pastoral care with more than one individual who was battling the deteriorative effects of PTSD, including disturbing thoughts and feelings, mental and physical distress, and unsettling fight-or-flight hypersensitivity.

Now with Dr. Smith, I was confronted with a jarring declaration. In a calm but insistent manner, he explained to me that what I had just described to him in the previous hour demanded, in his estimation, an unarguable diagnosis of PTSD. When I responded that I had been born in Iraq (to missionary parents), but I had never

served there (as if that were enough to negate his diagnosis), he made it clear that trauma of any number of variations has the capacity to give rise to the disorder in question.

Moreover, what Dr. Smith made crystal clear to me over the course of many subsequent sessions is that once one has PTSD, one *always* has PTSD. And he explained in plain language that in order to lessen the disorientation that accompanies PTSD, one should make appropriate effort to distance oneself—to the extent possible—from stressors, whatever those may be in one's life circumstances. But, he noted, when—not if—new stressors assault the patient, s/he will inevitably begin once again to experience the symptoms of PTSD. That hard but plain truth has proved to be enormously helpful to me ever since. Whenever I have occasionally begun to re-experience PTSD-oriented symptoms, the recognition of those symptoms has helped me then to make choices either to distance myself, if possible, from the causative stressors, or at least to do that which might help to temper their impact on me. Absent that distancing or tempering, the PTSD will—and always will—immobilize me again.

Why the overly personal story detailed above? Well, I am increasingly wondering whether what we as a world, nation, state, community, church fellowship, families, and individuals are all experiencing at this point in time is significant trauma. Given the confluence of all that has been unfolding over just the past year alone—an uncontrolled pandemic, fractured political and social order, economic turmoil, a growing recognition of systemic injustices, educational routines upended, the loss of in-person fellowship—there are now, in my estimation, growing numbers of us who are experiencing trauma. Whether or not any of us may be facing desperate circumstances in our lives, few if any of us are escaping the fragmenting impact of stress. To the contrary, I sadly wonder whether many of us may find ourselves vulnerable to the life churning effects of these dynamics both now and moving forward, whether we are consciously aware of it or not.

If I am correct about this—and I admittedly hope I am not—there may be consequential factors that then must be taken into our personal and corporate consideration. If indeed many of us may well be victims of PTSD-related dynamics, then both our present and our future come into play. Today it may be enormously important for each

of us to be attentive to the ways in which we may be experiencing the kinds of symptoms I detailed to my insightful therapist. Though we may likely display symptoms in different ways, it is important and beneficial to name our condition. Though admitting that one has PTSD-related dynamics does not banish the disorder, naming it enables one to make choices that will help one to thrive in spite of it. Doing so has been enormously helpful to me ever since my first conversation with Dr. Smith.

But beyond the present, there is the future for which to plan. I wonder whether the following scenario may lie just over our current horizon. Once the pandemic has been corralled by widespread vaccination, we will begin to return to more “normal” activities. We will join together for corporate worship, in-person schooling and workplace, attendance at concerts, backyard parties, and family reunions. And that will be wonderful! However... I wonder whether we may return to these and fail to do so with sober awareness that many of us are not well. My sincere worry is that our return may be superficially joy-filled and healthy, only to discover—if we're attentive to our deeper realities—that things may not feel right. We may wonder why we are experiencing these undesirable symptoms while at the same time feeling so much joy. I believe it is important to acknowledge that one or another variant of PTSD is now our emotional and psychological reality, and may well carry over into our future.

My concern—actually, my hope—is that today we will do the necessary work of careful self-examination and awareness, so we will be able to do the restorative work of healing self-care that tomorrow will demand of us. I sincerely pray that we, especially within the community of the Body of Christ, can come to spiritual grips with our new reality. Failure to do so may yield a future that is as disorienting—disordering—as is the present.

I invite us each and all to engage the unsettling realities I'm wondering about above. I sincerely look forward to doing so with many of my Hope Church sisters and brothers moving forward. I believe we can, by God's grace, move restoratively from the present into the future. I trust we can do so if and when we honestly acknowledge the trials of our current trauma, and then begin to explore the many and varied ways to make healthy choices—emotionally, spiritually, and physically.

Poetry Corner

Hosted by Randy Smit and Rhonda Edgington

We welcome long-time Hope Church member Francis Fike (Professor of English Emeritus at Hope College) back to Poetry Corner. He brings both an original work and a poem by Christina Rossetti, which share many themes in common with one another and our current times.

--Rhonda Edgington

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"miglior corso e con migliore stella." – Dante
"vita fugge e non s'arresta un' ora." – Petrarca

Time flies, hope flags, life plies a wearied wing;
Death following hard on life gains ground apace;
Faith runs with each and rears an eager face,
Outruns the rest, makes light of everything,
Spurns earth, and still finds breath to pray and sing;
While love ahead of all uplifts his praise,
Still asks for grace and still gives thanks for grace,
Content with all day brings and night will bring.
Life wanes; and when love folds his wings above
Tired hope, and less we feel his conscious pulse,
Let us go fall asleep, dear friend, in peace:
A little while, and age and sorrow cease;
A little while, and life reborn annuls
Loss and decay and death, and all is love.

--Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Having just completed another cycle of the Church Year, that Eastered in the Resurrection of Christ, we might well think about time—its incessant flow, its lack or fullness of meaning, and how it may be redeemed. In "As Water, Downward,"² the speaker compares the flowing water of a river to time: ever flowing, in which once we have stepped, we can never step in that same part of the river of time again. That realization leads to some ways that we have tried to redeem time through photography, poetry and public works. Those efforts afford some comfort in our attempts to give lasting meaning to the "chronos-flux," but of course, in the end, chronological time often defeats our efforts.

I admire Christina Rossetti's sonnet¹ for many reasons—its masterful craft in meter and structure, and its honest but victorious theology: she asks, what can sustain us in our passage through time that "flies" often without fulfillment, leaving us with "flagging" hope and our lives "tired" of dealing with the "loss and decay" that time brings? She reassures us that we are rescued in this journey by faith, and the love and grace to which it is open, which equip us to endure the voracious passage of time not only in peace but in the final promise of resurrection. Thus she reminds us that throughout the Church Year we can experience how, in Christ, *chronos* can become *kairos* (fulfilled time, redeemed time) as we meet life's opportunities, losses, and challenges.

--Francis Fike

¹From Rossetti's sonnet sequence *Monna Innominata*. The epigraphs read: Petrarch: "life flies and lingers not an hour." Dante: "A better way and a better star."

²From Francis Fike, *In the Same Rivers* (Florence, KY: Robert L. Barth, 1989).



As Water, Downward²

*You could not step twice in the same rivers; for
other and yet other waters are ever flowing on....
In the same rivers we step and do not step; we are
and we are not.*

--Heraclitus

Through time our story goes
As water downward flows,
Not knowing what its end
Or how streambed may bend.
So poems will proceed,
Linear in their need,
Or highways will unfold
Pavement as yet untolled.
Though photographs may freeze
Wind-motion in the trees,
Or fix a waterfall
In permanent recall,
They cannot stop the flux
That forms the chronos-cruix:
No camera, we know,
Can stop a river's flow;
The view from speeding car
Soon will be passed, and far;
However line may last,
The poem must go past.
Moments to hours extend,
Hours to days on end;
Down by the current swept,
No moment may be kept
No matter how we try
To arrest or amplify.
So what is time, at last?
Moments that all are past?
Moments we may not see?
A now that cannot be?
A matrix and a mode.
A river, poem, road.
Though on it flotsam rides,
River itself abides;
The ancient Appian Way
Takes travelers even today,
And poems made to last
Seize present out of past,
Redeeming deepest loss
With unforeseen kairos.



Let Parks Pique Your Interest

By Bruce Ten Haken, Creation Care Ministry member

I recently had the pleasure of interviewing Kristen Hintz, the Coordinator of Interpretive & Information Services at Hemlock Crossing, part of the Ottawa County Parks system. Kristen's title is another way of saying she makes visits to Ottawa County Parks educational and *fun*!

Kristen graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point with a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management with an emphasis in Environmental Education and Interpretation. She completed her elementary teaching credential at GVSU in 2007 and joined Ottawa County.

Some of the programs Kristen wanted to emphasize for the coming summer are contained below, as well as links to the Ottawa County Parks System. Please join in the fun, plug into an outdoor event, and be kind to yourself and this beautiful planet. Listed below are a few opportunities in hopes of piquing your interest.

Springing into Wellness, a program to get you active by visiting area Parks; Kayaking, Canoeing and Paddling; Kids' Summer Camp opportunities; Hiking, Bicycling, Mountain Biking; Stewardship and Nature programs to curtail invasive species; Macatawa Watershed and Greenways; Celebrating History of the Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway and the Getz Farm. There are also a new StoryWalk program for walking and reading, Birding Walks, Night Hikes, and Astronomy. It all sounds too fun, doesn't it!

The [Ottawa County Parks spring newsletter](#) will connect you to all of these Spring and early Summer programs. There's a wonderful variety of opportunities for individuals, groups and organizations, and families, no matter the area of interest.

You can also find the activities and events at Nature Center at Hemlock Crossing at the county's [Event Registration page](#). You can see exactly what Kristen and the rest of the staff have to offer. They are also building a library of online programs to bring nature to you, enabling you to explore the habitats in Michigan from the comfort of your own home. Each habitat and topic will include informational videos and fun activities for people of all ages including read-alouds, programs, and scavenger hunts.

To engage in person with everything Kristen and the Ottawa County Parks team has to offer, visit them at The Nature Center at Hemlock Crossing, 8115 West Olive Road, West Olive. They're open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. You can contact them by phone at (616) 786-4847 or email ocparks@miottawa.org

Oh, and by the way, a Hope Church member, Kristen is mother to Kayla and daughter to Peter and Carole Hintz and serves as Deacon on Consistory.

Feed your Spirit and get out into God's Creation!