
HOPE HEADLINES

A PUBLICATION OF HOPE MENNONITE CHURCH

Volume 37 Number 12

December 2022



Randy's Ramblings

Now that the elections are over . . . the campaigning for the next elections begin. At least that's the way it feels to me. And it doesn't matter if my candidate or my issue prevailed. The campaign for the next candidate or the next issue will begin as soon as the last one is elected, in a never-ending spiral.

Life is like that, isn't it? It never flows in a straight line, from beginning to ending, but seems to be more circular, winding round and round. Season to season, year to year, as the earth rotates and revolves around the sun. I can see why the author of Ecclesiastes says, "there is nothing new" (Eccl. 1:9).

At the same time, we enter each new year with new dreams, new aspirations. We turn the page on the calendar and see unlimited possibilities. What the future will become remains a mystery until the year comes to a close. And if we keep the dreams and aspirations in focus, we are more likely to see them fulfilled. And there is nothing new about that, either.

On the church calendar, the new year begins with Advent, a season of looking ahead with anticipation, a season to celebrate the arrival of something new and unexpected. This year the first Sunday of Advent will be November 27. The problem is that we too easily make Advent about the preparation for Christmas, an annual event that is part of the spiral of our lives through time. We may experience that season as a child, then a parent, and then a grandparent. But it feels like the same season all over again, just seen from different perspectives. In that telling of the story, Advent is simply the season where we find ourselves racing from Thanksgiving to Christmas, hoping we don't get lost along the way.

But what if we saw Advent as the miraculous inbreaking of God's presence in our midst? What if God was attempting to make another appearance? What if God's Advent is intended to change everything? I wonder what it would be like if we kept our eyes open to the possibilities God brings to our awareness. I wonder how we might find ways to give birth to God's kingdom in our midst, how we might become partners with the Divine

and create something new and wonderful at Hope Mennonite Church.

As Advent unfolds this year, I invite you to see the candles on the Advent wreath providing a light that shines in the darkness, offering a sign of promise; seeing the candles as beacons calling us forward into a future yet to be determined; to consider the Christmas lights in our neighborhoods as an invitation to reflect Christ's light to a world living in darkness.

~~Randy Quinn, interim pastor

Advent: A Season of Waiting and Watching

Advent is a word that implies a coming, a breaking in, an arrival. Typically, we think of it as anticipating the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Advent is also a season to remember that God continues to come, to make unexpected appearances, an arrival in the present as well as the future, and not just in the past. What is God preparing us to see? Where is God being revealed? How can we open our eyes to see what God is doing in our midst?

The Worship Commission has decided to help us see what God is doing by looking through the eyes of the children. Each Sunday during Advent, our children will hear the stories told by shepherds, the same shepherds who heard the angels announce the birth of Jesus. Week by week, the children will learn more about what it means to be a shepherd; they will also explore what it was like to wait for the Messiah. Since these shepherds were waiting before Jesus was born, they didn't know what to expect when he came. The shepherds will help our children learn to wait with anticipation – and maybe patience – for what God has in store for us. We will use their childlike anticipation as a lens through which to experience Advent this year, shifting from our own perspective to theirs. (We invite you to watch for children's artwork to help us make that shift.)

The sermons will invite us to wait for the Messiah to appear in our midst, both in the present and in the days to come, remembering that we don't always know what to expect. In Advent, we are invited to keep our eyes open for what new things God is doing in our midst.



December Worship at Hope

- *November 27 – 1st Sunday of Advent
- *December 4 – 2nd Sunday of Advent
Congregational meeting during SS; Holiday meal at noon
- *December 11 – 3rd Sunday of Advent; Hopeful Blues
- *December 18 – 4th Sunday of Advent; Choir and children’s Sunday School class presentations
- *December 21-6:30 pm Longest Night of the Year service
- *December 24 – 6:30 pm Christmas Eve candlelight service of Lessons and Carols
- *December 25 – Christmas Day at-home service

Hope Fall Festival

What a year! After Covid robbed us of the last two years of our Craft Bazaar as we had known it, we weren’t quite sure what to do this year. Was the virus actually under control enough to go back to our traditional event? Would people even remember what we had done and come back? Were there any changes we needed to make? Just about the time we decided to move forward this fall, the unthinkable happened and Pastor Dave was suddenly gone – and we were disoriented and confused. Initially we decided that we wouldn’t have the energy or enthusiasm we would need to move forward with the bazaar, so we thought it would be best to wait one more year and revisit it in 2023. However, God (and our Hope church family) had other plans!

After receiving several comments from people who thought this might be just what our church needed, we decided to go ahead. As the committee started to meet and plan, it felt like this was an opportunity to start a new chapter. So, we decided to try some new things this year (thanks Emily, Tiffany, and Katie!) that would mark a new beginning after two very difficult years – and would celebrate our 25th anniversary. We had absolutely no idea how things would go – but we decided to move ahead and explore some new twists.

So, the Hope Mennonite Fall Festival was born as our 25th fall event! While we didn’t invite crafters to participate this year, we had several new additions. In preparation for the festival, adult Sunday School time turned into all-generation peppernut baking sessions (we are hoping to make that a fall tradition!). There was face painting with Joanna, our artist-in-residence, pumpkin decorating, Gatorade ring toss, “A Cuppa Hope” coffee bar (hope everyone got to try the Menno Nut coffee

creation!), Salted Creamery homemade ice cream, live music by Kilometer 81 and Rachel Miller (thanks Renetta!), and we were finally able to accept credit cards. It felt a lot like we were now in the current century! We were also fortunate to have Margaret and her sister, Rose Haury, representing MCC with a fabric booth. It was like our own little “Quilter’s Corner”!

Our tried-and-true traditions were also part of the day. It turns out that people actually did remember peppernuts (thanks Leona and Byron!) and bierocks – and both were again very popular! The bake sale was again full of culinary works of art by our church family, the soup was absolutely delicious (thanks Annette and Vicki!), and the sausage was grilled to perfection (thanks guys!). Cinnamon rolls, pumpkin bread, and pie were also, as always, favorites of our guests. As money has come in, we have been grateful that over \$10,000 has been raised to help support our mission partners, the Givens family, Family Promise, and Camp Mennoscah. As always, our prayer is that we can be a small part of Jesus’s mission of love and compassion on earth.

So, as we come to the close of 2022, we are grateful for God’s leading and wisdom as we explored this new chapter. And for our church family, who again went above and beyond all expectations of jumping in and creating this new chapter. We so missed Pastor Dave bounding into the kitchen the morning of the event with his “Top of the morning, ladies!” but we trust he was with us in spirit. In closing, as Colossians 3:23 instructs us, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.” Hope Mennonite Church, you certainly worked at it with all your heart and the Lord has been honored through your efforts!

Hope Mennonite Fall Festival Committee:

Leona Adrian, Katie Chlumsky, Renetta Gooden, Emily Regehr, Tiffany Regehr, Connie Luty, and Laurie Regehr





In January of 2021, Hope Mennonite formed a support group for Working Men of Christ, an

organization dedicated to assisting formerly incarcerated men as they re-enter society, find meaningful work, and begin to serve their communities. Our group includes Chris Bellar, Vicki Howard, Travis Cox, Connie Luty, Marcus Loganbill, Jason Jantz, and Carol Preheim.

This group and our congregation have assisted WMOC in many ways – helping to organize a Gala Event, beginning a weekly Bible study, hosting the men at church services, and involving WMOC in educating our congregation with regard to the difficulties experienced by returning citizens in our community. We have participated in work projects with Sandwich Saturday and at Camp Mennoscah. Five men at Hope have become trained mentors for WMOC residents.

Unfortunately, as has been the case with many nonprofit organizations, Working Men of Christ, has fallen upon hard times. The organization has been operating at a deficit this past year, and many changes have taken place in order to keep the ministry afloat.

In June, WMOC hired a consultant/implementor to assist with changes to make the organization sustainable. Steps recently taken have included: closing down operations at our Kansas City house, selling a house in Wichita, and eliminating two staff positions. WMOC will also be closing another house in Manhattan by the end of the year.

Because of the current instability and uncertainty of the WMOC ministry, our support group at Hope has recommended that we discontinue budgetary support of WMOC. We have seen significant support from the congregation for helping returning citizens, and although we will no longer be supporting WMOC with our annual budget, we opted to continue to support returning citizens in some way. We have recommended to Witness and Outreach, that our line item be changed from “WMOC support” to “returning citizen fund” and reduce our budget from the current \$2500 to \$1000.

Although the committee will no longer meet regularly, we will stay tuned to the needs of returning citizens in our community and support WMOC or other sister organizations when the opportunity arises.

We thank the congregation for the energy, passion, and commitment to working with returning citizens. Our hope is that this not be the end of our efforts, but rather a pause, as we contemplate how best to move forward in serving this specific group of marginalized people in our community.

~~*Marcus Loganbill*



December Reminders:

December 4
 Worship Leader-Mike V.
 Scripture-Brad
 Pianist-Cynthia
 Song Leader-Galen
 Tech-Scott
 Zoom Host-Lee
 Advent candles-Greg & Dawn

December 11
 Worship Leader-Mike V.
 Scripture-Vicki
 Pianist-Laurie/Hopeful Blues
 Song Leader-Lowell
 Tech-TBD
 Zoom-Brenda
 Advent Candles-Jerold & Donna

December 18
 Worship Leader-Natalie
 Scripture-Mike M.
 Pianist-Ruthie
 Song Leader-Trae
 Tech-Randy P.
 Zoom-Brenda
 Advent candles-Grant

December 21-Longest Night Service
 Worship Leader-Pastor Randy
 Pianist-Cynthia
 Tech-Michelle J.

December 24-Christmas Eve/Lessons & Carols
 Worship Leader-TBD
 Pianist-Vicki
 Tech-Michelle J.

December 25-Christmas Day
 No services at Hope. Enjoy your families!

Worship Commission Coordinator
 December 4/11-Ruthie

S.S. Superintendent
 December 4-Justin
 December 11/18-Delaine

Sanctuary Prep

December 4-Russ G.
December 11-Joanna
December 18-Heidi
December 24-Connie

Nursery

December 4-Donna H./Lori R.
December 11-Mike & Val
December 18-Jordon & Emily

S.S. helpers/preschool

December 4-Cindy
December 11-Jared
December 18-Alison

Coffee

December 4-Bob & Delaine
December 11-Eldon & Annette
December 18-Travis & Charity

