
HOPE HEADLINES

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Randy's Ramblings

I never did understand the fuss around Groundhog Day. I mean, I recognize the mystery of how an animal seems to know the date on the calendar. It evokes a sense of awe. It's part of what draws people to places like the mission in San Juan Capistrano, California. (In case you don't know, that's where the swallows appear every year on March 19, which happens to be the date of St. Joseph's Day). And I've been there to watch the purple martins gather here in Wichita. (That happens in August each year.)

It really is awe-inspiring to note how nature seems to follow a calendar. The same thing can be said about the people who built places like Stone Henge. It was built with a sense of amazement about the mysterious world in which we live, a world that includes predictable events like the returning of swallows or the angle of the sun on the solstice.

But the idea of the groundhog's shadow predicting the weather is a little bit far-fetched for me. I mean, I know the date is exactly half-way between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. And it doesn't matter if we have six more weeks of winter or there are six more weeks until spring, it's really not saying much. (It is amazing that the groundhog knows we are halfway between the beginning of winter and the end of winter, though.)

I don't know if the fuss around Groundhog Day reflects a desire to avoid the science of the meteorologists; I suspect it's more a hankering for a sense of order that nature provides.

We all desire some sense of order in our lives, even those who enjoy variety and diversity.

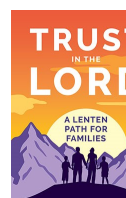
Some people won't eat leftovers because they want something new every day. But even they prefer to eat at a certain time.

As we enter into a new phase of life at Hope Mennonite, I know there are some who want stability and order. We don't mind the change of seasons, for a new pastor to arrive, but we are anxious for the new season to begin. How long will the search process take? We are like those who watch the groundhog for a reliable roadmap for the future.

Unfortunately, God's ways are not our ways, as Isaiah points out (Is. 55:8). We can try to circumvent the process, but the pastoral search committee's work is better done slowly, methodically, and with great care. Doing so will allow us all to trust God's agency in their discernment work.

So, when Punxsutawney Phil makes his appearance this week, I'm going to give thanks that God prefers to keep the future a mystery and to watch for signs of God at work, no matter what the weather.

--Pastor Randy



Lent Devotional

This year's selection is designed for adults and families. The focus is on trust in the Lord. If you wish to receive a free copy from the Worship Commission, please contact the church office no later than **February 6**.



Congregation Survey Coming

The Pastor Congregation Relations Committee (PCRC) will conduct a congregational survey in February and March. Kathy Goering Reid has agreed to continue advising through this process and will prepare the final report. Kathy is a retired Mennonite pastor living in Waco, Texas. The process we will use for the review is called, "The Appreciative Way" and involves surveying various groups within the church in a group setting.

Group interviews will take place during the Sunday School hour in February/March.

Members of the Pastor Congregation Relations Committee (PCRC) will conduct the interviews with the help of three recorders. Members of PCRC are, Bob Stolze, Lee Schmucker and Myron Regier. Recorders are Renetta Gooden, Margaret Wiebe and Delaine Stolze.

Please note the following schedule:

February 19 Women's Bible study groups, Tuesday group and Thursday group

February 26 Vision Council and Young Adults (college age - under 40)

March 5 - All others

All Hope attendees are encouraged to take part in the review process. If anyone prefers to do the survey privately, feel free to do so. Those surveys can be turned in to the church secretary. If you are homebound, let Myron Regier know and your survey will be picked up at your convenience. Survey questions will be sent to all attendees via email the first week of February. Paper copies of the survey questions will also be available in the church office.

Discipleship Commission News

As noted above, the Pastor Congregations Relations Commission will be using Sunday School time to conduct their congregational survey with different groups within the

congregation. There will be no other Sunday School class scheduled for those not involved on those Sundays.

Witness & Outreach will be using the other Sundays in February and March to highlight the various ministries that Hope supports. They will be inviting guest speakers from various organizations to share about their vision and work. We encourage you to participate in these sessions to learn more about where Hope sends their Witness & Outreach funds.

To date:

February 12 – Community Peacemaker's Team

March 26 – Family Promise



Will you be a delegate?

MC USA will be holding its biannual convention this summer in Kansas City July 3-6, with the delegate session July 7-8. The theme is "Be Transformed." Hope is entitled to send 3 delegates. You can find lots of information at <https://convention.mennoniteusa.org> If you are interested, please contact the church office or our church moderator, Michelle Jantz. There is money available to cover the registration fee and some additional expenses. This will probably be the last biannual convention, as there has been a recommendation to go to every three-year cycle.



Children's Library Nook

Beginning the week of January 29, Joanna Pinkerton will be painting the children's nook mural in the library. The library will continue to be free for use and meetings. Check up on the progress each week!



February Reminders...

Worship

February 5- Peter Goerzen
Worship Leader-Mike V.
Scripture-Donna H.
Pianist-Amy
Song Leader-Galen
Tech-Scott
Zoom Host-Lee

February 12-Pastor Randy
Worship Leader-Lori M.
Scripture-David S.
Pianist-Cynthia
Song Leader-Lowell
Tech-Mike V.
Zoom Host-Brenda

February 19-Pastor Randy
Worship Leader-Lowell
Scripture-Marcus
Pianist-Laurie
Song Leader-Trae
Tech-Randy P.
Zoom Host-Lee

February 22-Ash Wednesday

February 26-Pastor Randy
Worship Leader-Mike V.
Scripture-Greg
Pianist-Ruthie
Song Leader-Lowell
Tech-Michelle J.
Zoom Host-Michelle J.

Sanctuary Prep

February 5-Heidi
February 12-Connie
February 19-Lori
February 26-Russ G.

Nursery

February 5-Donovan & Laurie
February 12-Lee S.; Lori R.
February 19-Val & Mike
February 26-Tyler & Shelby

Preschool Helpers

February 5-Cindy
February 12-Alison
February 19-Jared
February 26-Renetta

S.S. Superintendent

February 5-Cynthia
February 12-Delaine
February 19-Cindy
February 26-Justin

Coffee

February 5-Bob & Delaine
February 12-Coffee Bar
February 19-Scott & Connie
February 26-Chris B.

Head Usher-Steve H.





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