
HOPE HEADLINES

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Randy's Ramblings

While I was working on my sermon for this Sunday, I looked down at my hands and noticed white paint. White paint I failed to clean off my hands.

I realized the paint was telling a story, it is the story of how I have been spending my time off. It tells the story that I'm finishing our basement, and have been painting the trim boards. There is still more to be done, so I suspect the tell-tale sign of paint on my hands will be present for a while.

As I reflected on that paint, I wondered what other things people might be able to observe by looking. I have clearly defined tan lines on my feet. Anyone who knows me knows that means I wear Birkenstocks every day of the year, and in the warm months I wear them without socks. Those tan lines tell a story.

I also have a clearly defined tan line under my Fitbit. For decades, I didn't wear a watch, but when I started tracking my steps, I found it easiest to wear a Fitbit on my wrist. It has a dark screen, so I don't use it as a watch, but it does reveal my desire to track my steps. Maybe people could infer that I am concerned about my health because that tan line also tells a story.

You could say my gray hair tells a story, too. And I'm sure my choice in fashion styles could tell a story. (I know that was true whenever I put on my Navy uniform. It told a story, and for those who knew the nuances of the differences between uniforms, they could tell quite bit about my history and status in the Navy.

But, I wondered, how could people tell I am a person of faith? How can others observe that I am a follower of Jesus? What are the marks of a Christian? Are there unique marks that help people know I am Methodist? How much has spending the last year with the Anabaptist faith tradition affected who I am and how does that "show up" in the way I live my life?

My tentative answer is you can't tell much by looking at what I am wearing (other than my smile, perhaps). I could wear a cross or a T-shirt, perhaps. But the truth is my faith shows up in the actions I take and the ways I respond to the circumstances of life, not in my clothing choices.

As I've been working on sermons about neighboring, I've been paying attention again to my neighbors. I see some with flags in their yards. I see some with bumper stickers on their cars. I can let my own imagination tell a story about them. Or – as I've been saying my sermons – I can get to know them and find out the story behind that flag, that bumper sticker, that yard decoration.

And my listening to their story, I hope they begin to see and know who I am and why I am never at home on a Sunday morning! And I realize that my faith is rooted in a sense of relationship – a relationship with God that affects my relationships with family, neighbors, and the earth itself.

What story do you think people are telling about you?

Working Men of Christ is an organization which offers housing and mentoring to former inmates, helping them become productive, healthy members of the body of Christ and a positive influence in their communities.



Through the awakening offered by a Christ-focused life, those who were broken are made whole again and are mobilized to serve their neighbors, breaking the

cycle of poverty and crime.

The WMOC home here in Wichita is the House of Jeremiah. Other houses are located in Manhattan, Neodesha, and Topeka. Currently Hope Mennonite supports the men of the House of Jeremiah with a weekly Bible Study. We have also joined efforts in various work projects and volunteer opportunities. The men have joined us in worship several times in the last few years, and led us in one of our services this summer.

One ongoing need for the men is toiletries and underwear. These gentlemen often come out of incarceration with absolutely nothing. Mennonite Central Committee has created "returning citizen kits" and we have used these in the past to give to the men of WMOC. Currently MCC is out of kits, so we have opted to again make our own here at Hope.

Please pick up a flier on the Witness and Outreach table and purchase any of the items on the list. Items listed are in quantities for each kit and we realize that your packages of T-shirts or underwear may come in other quantities. Buy as many as you wish, and our Witness and Outreach Committee will put them together in the correct quantities for each kit. We ask that you purchase your items by October 15, and place them in the bin marked "WMOC" or "Working Men of Christ" in Fellowship Hall.

As the weather gets cooler, the men will be in need of heavier jackets and coats. Check your closets. We will accept any new or gently used coats to donate to the men. Gently used clothing is also accepted. These items can be placed in the same place in Fellowship Hall or given to any member of the Bible Study team.

Thank you in advance for your contributions. If you wish to join the Bible Study team at Jeremiah, please see any member of the team. If you have other ideas regarding the support of returning citizens, WMOC, or other organizations, please visit with any member of Witness and Outreach.

Jeremiah Support Team: Lowell Birkey, Travis Cox, Marcus Loganbill, Randy Pinkerton, Jim Voth

Newsletter thoughts...if you have any thoughts on how we could upgrade, make it better type of ideas, let the church office know.



New Opportunities at Hope

Exciting meetings are taking place at Hope as we take the first step of the listening of the DART (Sedgwick County Multifaith Justice) organization. These Listening Gatherings are dedicated to sharing our personal stories about problem situations we see and experience in Sedgwick County. Hopefully everyone in the congregation has received an invitation to attend a group. If not, please contact Brenda Lilliston

Notes from our meetings will be sent to the Sedgwick County Multifaith Justice organization. Their team will study the responses gathered from all participating faith communities to determine common community issues.

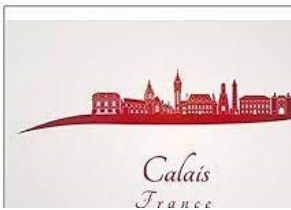
On November 9, major priorities gleaned from the gathered responses will be presented to the representatives of the faith communities. **Two priorities for Wichita will be selected by a representative vote.** At that same meeting, **the group will be voting on a permanent name for our justice ministry.** Currently, the ad-hoc name for this initiative is "Sedgwick County Multifaith Justice Organization." Each locality determines its own name.

After the November 9 meeting, the next steps include:

- **November through April: the research-to-action process** occurs. Volunteer research committees will be formed to determine viable solutions that will resolve the problems of the selected priorities.
- **April 11:** a solution briefing takes place where **research findings and stories about the problem will be presented.**
- **May 9:** The organization will hold a **large public meeting called a Nehemiah Action** that will present the well-researched solutions to public officials.
- **June 20: a celebration** will be held to celebrate our work and raise funds to keep our efforts going.

Thanks for however you choose to take part in this Multifaith Justice initiative.

~~submitted by Wendy Wiens



From our Mission Partners: Joseph and Rachel Givens

At the Maria Skobtsova House (MSH), anything can happen. Sometimes, nothing happens. Some days are just normal days, with housekeeping, grocery shopping, playing with kids and prayer. Occasionally, those days even feel boring, especially for someone like me, who likes to keep busy. But then, there are the other days. We might get a call from a family or single woman who needs a place to stay. A woman might need to go to the hospital. People might be coming over for a meeting and dinner. As you can probably guess, all these things tend to happen all at once. I want to share two stories with you that illustrate the highs and lows of the work we do at MSH. It was morning, and I was sitting at the table, eating breakfast with our guests, trying to plan the day with the volunteers. A girl looked out the window and shouts, "It's Samri and Mohammed!" (Their names have been changed to protect their identity.) The guests, who had left the night before to attempt to cross the Channel into the United Kingdom, were back. Everyone ran to the door to greet them. There were too many people in the hallway, so I went into the kitchen to tidy up a bit, figuring I'd get to welcome them back soon enough on my own. But having heard a commotion in the hall, I went to look, and Samri was lying on the floor, head cradled in Rachel's arms. An Iranian woman rushed into the kitchen and asked for salt. She instructed Rachel to sprinkle some in Samri's mouth. Our volunteer began crying. I found out that Samri had fainted. I don't learn the story until much later that day.

Samri and her friends were on the beach, waiting to cross into the United Kingdom. The police arrived and began spraying smoke and teargas on the crowd of migrants. The people were forced to run for their safety. Samri almost passed out on the beach, but somehow, she managed to walk back to MSH with her friends. She was broken.

We rushed her to her bed and told her that if she was not feeling better later, we would take her to the doctor. She and her friends went to sleep and slept most of the day. When Rachel was finally able to talk with her, she hugged Rachel tightly and wouldn't let go. She began sobbing into Rachel's arms. No words were spoken, but we knew. We were aware of how the police treat migrants in Calais. We were aware that, in the eyes of the authorities, they're nothing more than cockroaches.

They're not human beings with dreams and desires. They're a pest that needs to be exterminated. Our hearts broke with and for Samri and her friends. We know them and love them. Everyone in the house was shaken by this injustice. If only this was a one-time event. But it was not. It happens in Calais every single day.

The second story happened on my birthday. Most of the day at MSH was boring and full of routine meetings. We wanted to go to Dunkirk that afternoon, but the meetings got in the way, so we chose to go to Notre Dame Cathedral in Calais instead. It's a beautiful medieval church, one of the few medieval buildings that survived World War II. We took Samri and her friend, as well as our new volunteer and my brother, who was visiting. We enjoyed wandering the garden and seeing the outside of the beautiful old building, but disappointingly, the doors were locked.

We went back to MSH for dinner. We had a lovely dinner with pasta, chicken, and various breads and sauces. After the meal, we shared a precious moment of prayer with anyone who would join. The Iranian woman had baked two cakes, one for me and one for her daughter, who had turned 11 the day before. Everyone sang, 'Happy Birthday,' and we each got one candle to blow out. Then, the Iranian woman made her daughter and me cut the first slice of our respective cakes before she took over. The cake was delicious! It was a truly touching experience.

Next, we went out to meet some friends. We invited the adults at MSH to join us. The Iranian woman and her husband were happy to come. They hadn't had a night out without their children in a long time. My brother stayed home with our boys. We spent the evening talking and laughing and giving everyone a brief respite from the stress of life.

As we dispersed to head to our respective homes. I heard my phone ding. It was a short message from some former MSH guests, who had left several days before: 'We have arrived safely, thanks to God.' When I told Rachel, she screamed and threw her arms in the air. Our friends, an Ethiopian man and his pregnant wife, were safe in the United Kingdom, and their dream had come true. We celebrated a perfect end to a beautiful birthday.

Such is life in Calais. Sometimes the lows are so low that I wonder if it's worth it anymore. But then, the small thing happens, like a message letting me know that our friends are safe. The highs make the lows bearable. Knowing that what we do really matters is wonderful and uplifting."



October Reminders...

Worship

October 1

Worship-Mike V.
Scripture-David S.
Pianist-Ruthie
Song-Galen
Tech-Scott
Host-Brenda

October 8

Worship-Kendal
Scripture-Lori M.
Pianist-Cynthia
Song-Trae
Tech-Mike V.
Host-Lee

October 15

Worship-Kendal
Scripture-Donna H.
Pianist-Laurie
Song-Lowell
Tech-Randy P.
Host-Kendal & Marjie

October 22

Worship-TBA
Scripture-Ruthie
Pianist-Vicki
Song-Lowell
Tech-Michelle J.

October 29

Church Retreat at Camp Mennoscah
NO worship at Hope

Greeters

October 1-Jim & Barb
October 8-Marcus & Cynthia
October 15-Connie; Heidi J-L
October 22-Chris & Amy

Nursery

October 1-Annette & Eldon
October 8-Donovan & Laurie
October 15-Greg & Leah
October 22-Shelby & Tyler
October 29-Church Retreat

Worship Prep

October 1-Lori M.
October 8-Russ
October 15-Ruthie
October 22-Joanna
October 29-Church Retreat

Coffee

October 1-Mike & Kim
October 8-Chris B.
October 15-Randy & Joanna
October 22-Galen & Cindy
October 29-Church Retreat

Mowers

October 1-Jim B.
October 8-Scott
October 15-Jerold
October 22-Randy P.
October 29-Randy G.

Memorial Garden

October 1-14-Karin K.

Head Usher for October

Steve Howard



October 2023

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1  World Communion Sunday	2 7:00pm Worship	3 10am Women's Bible Study 7:00pm Vision Council	4 6:30-8:00 small group Meal & Peppernut baking 7:00pm Choir	5 Scharla Kremer	6	7 Val Mayta
	8 Lunch & CROP sswalk all at Sedgwick County Park after Sunday school (please sign up!) 	9	10 10am Women's Bible Study	11	12 7:00pm Women's Bible Study	13	14 Bethel 
	15 Landon Regehr Joanna Pinkerton	16 	17 10am Women's Bible Study	18	19 Cabbage cooking 7:00pm Women's Bible Study	20 Bierock making day	21
	22 Ellice Chlumsky	23	24 Lowell Birkey	25 Carol Matulka	26 7:00pm Women's Bible Study	27	28 
	29 	30 	31 10am Women's Bible Study HAPPY HALLOWEEN 10am Women's Bible Study				