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# HOPE HEADLINES

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## Randy's Ramblings

I don't know how it is for you, but when I think about the calendar in December, it feels like a huge mountain, with Christmas at the peak. The mountain is so tall, I can't see what's on the calendar for January.

I have a nephew who was born on January 2, for example. In the years we were sending birthday cards to all our nieces and nephews, his was always late – because we couldn't see that far on the calendar. The "mountain" of the holiday made it too hard to see until after we turned the calendar of the new year.

When I realized what was going on, I stopped scheduling events and appointments in January – or at least waiting until the second week of the new year. And whenever I had something to say about it, I didn't put anything on the church calendar in January, either. I didn't want people to lose sight of it because of the flurry of activities on the December calendar.

Now that the holiday is behind us, I want to make sure you pay attention to the calendar, because we put things on it! I also want to let you know that in October I began moving toward the Narrative Lectionary, something that will become more apparent as the new year progresses. The previous lectionary has been around for several decades. This new one is in its early stages of development. Unlike the previous versions, this one only uses one text each week. It follows a four-year cycle, rather than three, allowing for each of the gospels to be heard. Each year begins in September with creation stories, working through the Old Testament until Christmas. As the new year opens, we hear from one gospel, moving from the birth to the resurrection of Jesus. The Narrative Lectionary then follows Acts and the Epistles until Pentecost, leaving the summer open for other thematic series or whatever a church chooses.

I decided to try it out. Mostly, I knew it would be easy for me to lose my focus in my last six months here, so I needed a challenge that would make me learn and grow while preparing sermons every week. I hope you find it offers a meaningful variation in our worship experience.

Since the gospel we will be following from January through March is Mark, I will be reading the gospel at least twice between Christmas and New Years Day. I invite you to do the same. Together, we may hear things we didn't know were there, and together, we can turn the calendar and find something exciting awaiting us!

## Membership Inquiry Class

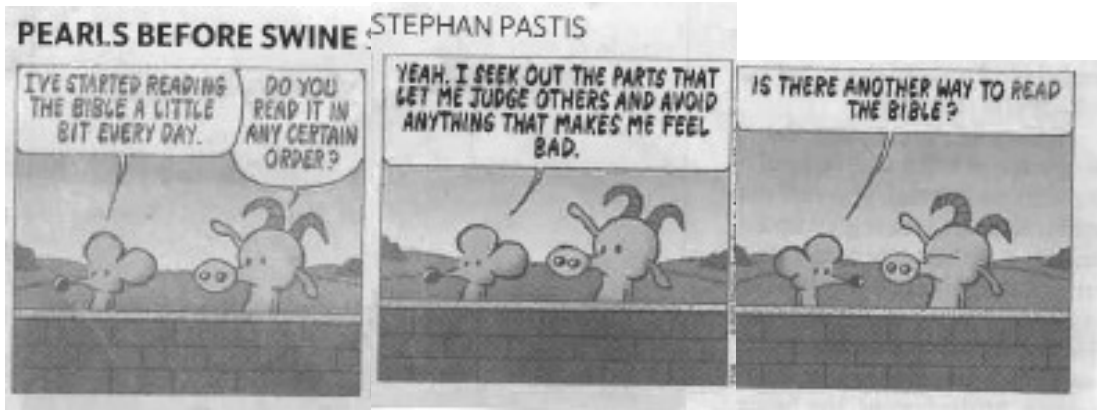
Rev. Randy will lead a three-week class in January for those interested in learning about membership at Hope Mennonite Church. There is no requirement to join after completing the course, but he hopes it will help people discern if that is the right step to take. If you are interested in participating, let the church office know. If you are currently a member and want to be reminded of what it means to be an Anabaptist or a Mennonite or a Christian or a member of Hope, feel free to join the conversation, as well! The class will meet on Wednesday evenings, 6 pm – 7pm, on January 10, 17, and 24. (If you are interested, but those dates don't work, let Randy know.)



## Sandwich Saturday 2023 review + 2024 opportunities

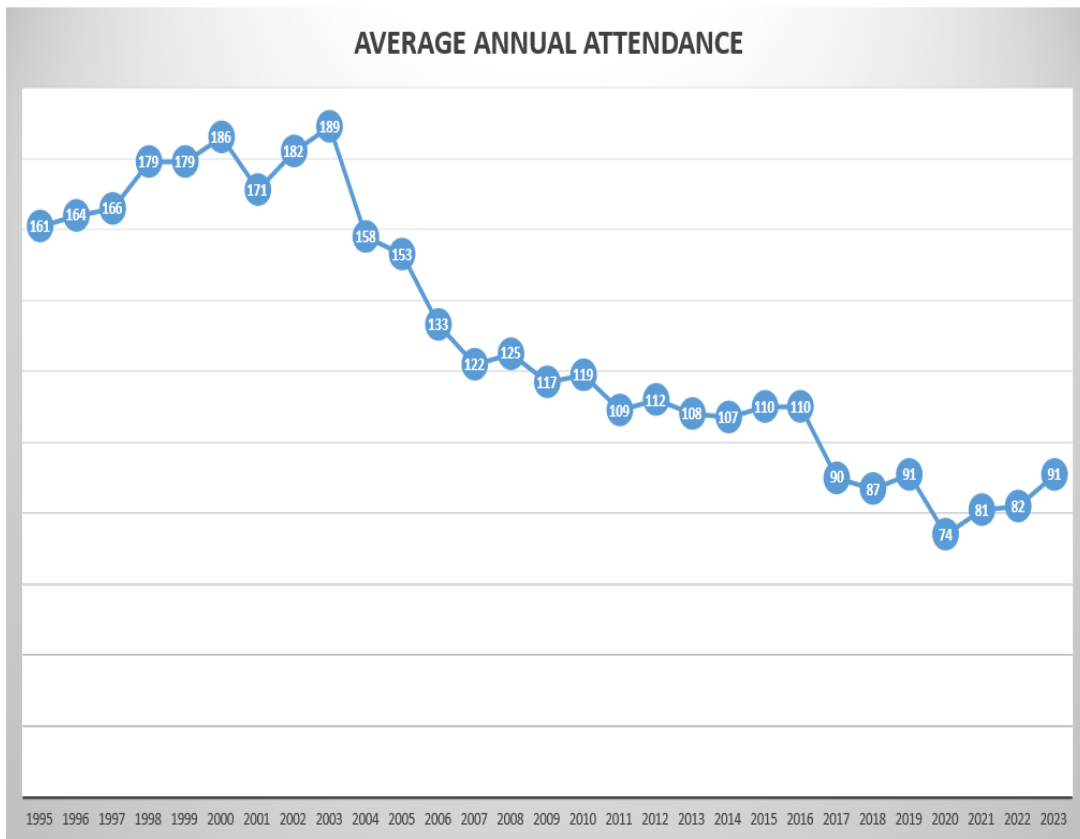
This program led by St. John's Episcopal church offers sack lunches to those who are houseless each Saturday of the month. Hope partners with other congregations in this mercy ministry: St James/St John's Episcopal, St Stephens Episcopal, Good Shepherd Episcopal, Pathway, Christ Lutheran, Gloria Dei Lutheran, Resurrection, St. Andrews Lutheran and Northside Church of Christ. In 2023, the following groups participated: Working Men of Christ (3), Andale High School FCA, Conway Springs NHS/tennis team, Loganbill small group (2), Travis Cox (2), Jason Jantz small group, Bob Stolze small group, and the youth adults. Coordinating responsibilities are putting together the 80 sack lunches (all items are purchased and waiting at Hope) and distributing the lunches at St. John's Episcopal Church downtown Wichita. Hope's designated date is always the first Saturday of the month and we are responsible for distributing 80 lunches. Please consider putting together a group this year and sign up on the bulletin board. And as always – we need 14 dozen cookies each month.

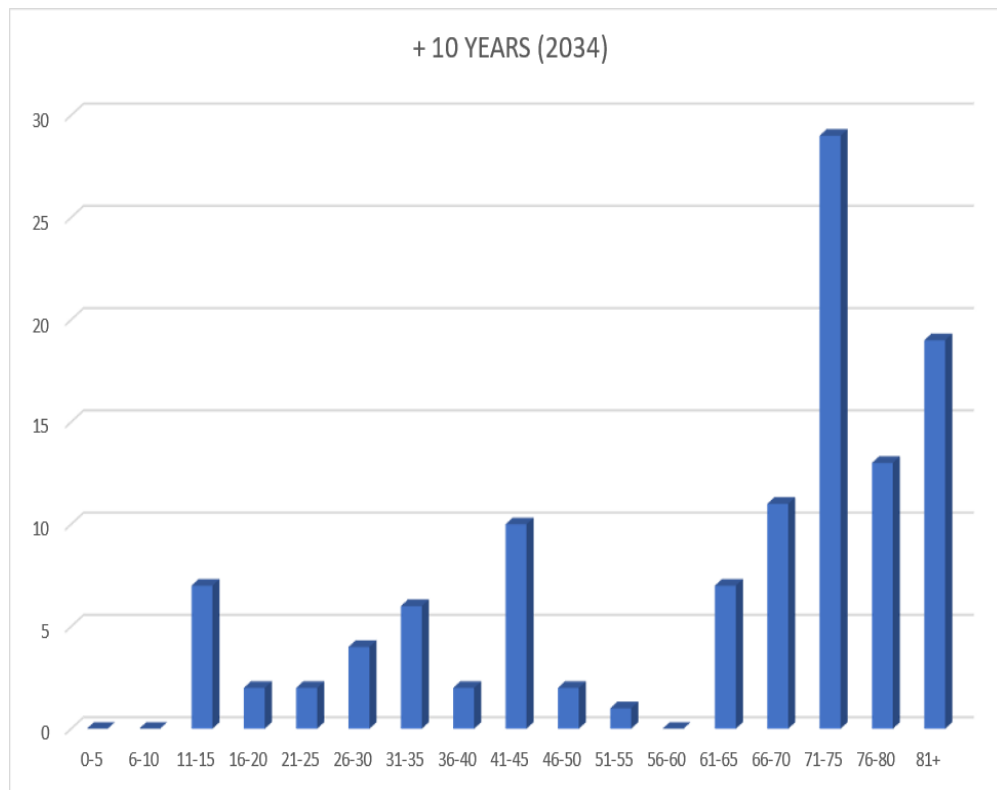
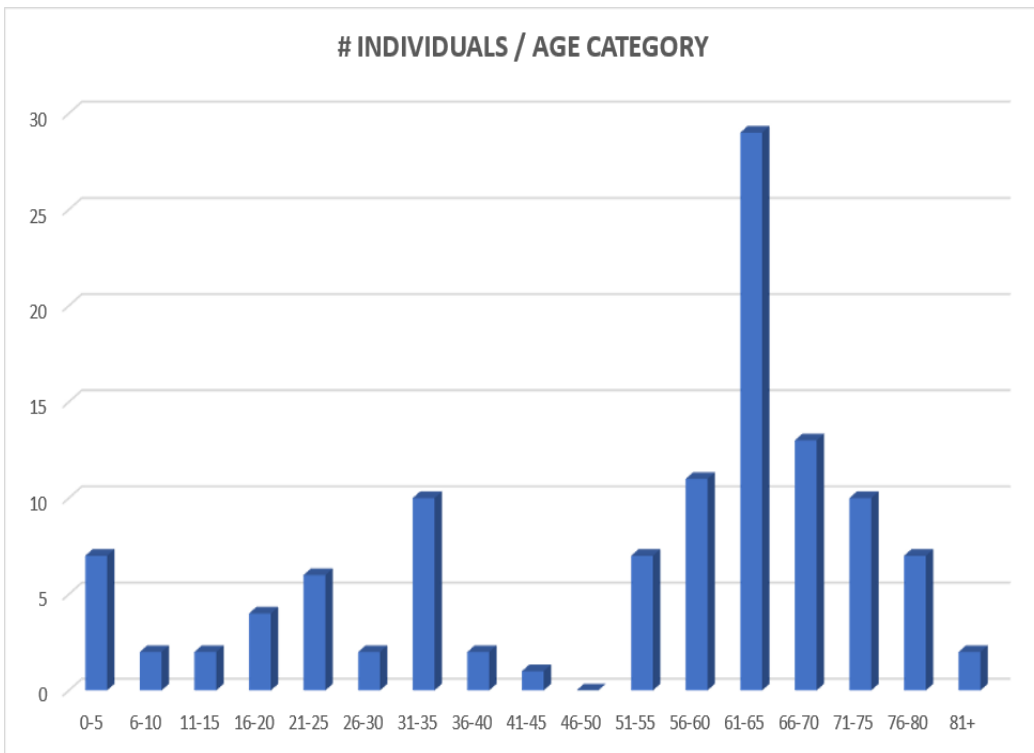
# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



## HOPE'S DEMOGRAPHICS

The Pastor Church Relations Committee has led us through a discernment process and we have chosen several areas of focus for our congregation over the next 3-5 years. As we look to the future it may be helpful to look at some data on attendance and demographics. In this issue of Hope Headlines, you will find a number of graphs" one showing average church attendance from 1995 (161) to present (91); a second showing current numbers of individuals (regular attenders) in five-year age categories and then a couple of projections. -Submitted by Marcus Loganbill





**New books in the library**

The holy in the night: finding freedom in a season of waiting - Shannon Dycus  
 Rooted in faith: practices for living well on a fragile planet - Sarah Werner

The spacious path: practicing the restful way of Jesus in a fragmented world - Tamara Murphy  
 What is the church and why does it exist? – David Fitch  
 What does justice look like and why does God care about it? – Judith McCartner

## Reference books

Believer's Church Bible Commentary:

1 & 2 King – Lynn Jost

Luke – Mary Shertz

Leviticus – Perry Yoder

The IVP Background Bible Commentary OT

The IVP Background Bible Commentary NT

## Biography

Justa's escape: a journey from WWII Ukraine – Justina

Neufeld

## Adult Fiction

Ladies of the lake – Cathy Gohlke

The Medallion – Cathy

Sugar birds – Cheryl Bostrom

## Picture story book

Today I feel like a jelly donut – Katie Phillips

All about Bible animals – Simona Piscioneri

When I go to church, I belong – Elrena Evans

You come from greatness – Sara Chinakwe

Everyone belongs – Heather Avis

**Eastern Mennonite University Seminary news:** Make plans to start your 2024 ministry inspired and renewed! Cultivating unity within faith communities can be difficult when cultural pressures are divisive. As the next iteration of the former School for Leadership Training, Shalom Academy 2024 offers a place to learn and reflect on the practices that move congregations past divisiveness and toward peace. Keynote speakers and workshops give fresh perspectives on justice-inspired shalom, and new-this-year excursions provide for relaxation and recreation with friends both old and new. For more information or to register for Shalom Academy 2024 visit <https://emu.edu/seminary/slt/>.



## **Making Of the Cross** by Dave Miller

I joined Make ICT, a “maker space,” in January of 2021 to learn how to do wood turning. Part of becoming a member is taking a tour of the facility to see what each area has to offer. I took a few introductory classes on the lathe but also had an introduction to the metal shop and

the “Fab Lab” where the 3D printers and laser cutters live. It didn't take me long to get hooked on making items with the laser cutters but everything I was making was small and not much of a challenge.

The laser can create amazingly intricate cuts measuring fractions of millimeters. Sitting in church I'd think about the paper cross that was created several years ago and thought a wood version would be interesting. After approaching Joanna and Leslie with the idea the request was to make a Celtic Cross.

The “requirements” were minimal: It should be 9 ft tall and 5 ft wide plus a 3 ft base, the depth should fit the space in front of the windows, and to please have Celtic knots or designs. I started with small basic concepts to make sure I understood what was desired. I cut a small model for reference of what I was thinking. I added interchangeable panels and colors and light diffuser panels so you can't see the detail from the back side of the cross inside the panels.

I started with an idea rather than a design, which allowed a lot of creativity but required some experimentation. I wasn't happy with the initial design to hang the interchangeable panels. Could the Celtic cutouts cover more space? Could the shadow of the side panels have more depth? Through collaboration we kept making the final product better and better, though each change required modifying the design and cutting new pieces.



The final design was coming together in mid-November and I was finally staining and gluing the sections of the top together over Thanksgiving weekend. To my horror the colors from left-to-right didn't match the top and bottom. Then I looked at it from a different angle and the top was darker than the other sections. I was sick to my stomach. How could this be happening a couple weeks before I needed to be done!?! I finally realized that because each of the four sections of the top are identical, just rotated, the grain of the wood was affecting how it reflected the color. I'm calling this the “perspectives of the cross.” (Pastor Randy – is there a sermon in here?)

The only mechanical joinery in the cross are the four screws holding the top to the stem and another four screws securing the cross to the base. The base uses screws for the skeletal support structure, but the rest of the cross is just wood and glue. I created a jig to make

sure all the screw holes aligned and I tested connecting the top to the stem and also the stem to the base, but the entire structure wasn't assembled prior to being installed at the church. I also had not seen it with all the color panels prior to installation. I felt an incredible amount of relief and satisfaction that it all worked!

Of all the design elements, I'm most proud of the way the 4 sections of the top fit together using an interlocking design that point to the center, and the curves that give it some grace among all the hard angles.

I hope you all enjoy the cross and that it adds to your worship experience here at church.



**In this report, Hope's JUSTICE TOGETHER's Leadership Team** (Brenda Glanzer Lilliston, Joanna and Randy Pinkerton, Lowell Birkey, Marcus Loganbill,

Wendy Wiens, Jared Regehr, and Vicki Howard) will address the questions that have been asked since our December congregational meeting. **What is DART? The DART program (Direct Action Research Team)** is a new Sedgwick County justice ministry initiative supported by numerous faith organizations. Wichita's branch of DART has recently been named, **JUSTICE TOGETHER**. Hope Mennonite Church has made several initial steps to be involved with this new ministry. Hope's JUSTICE TOGETHER Leadership Team proposes that we officially decide **to sign a covenant** with JUSTICE TOGETHER at our annual business meeting on January 28. More information about the covenant is provided later in this report. *Thank you for your prayerful consideration.*

The national DART Organization network is comprised of 31 affiliated organizations in 10 states. Besides the Wichita branch, Kansas has four other DART affiliates in Lawrence, Topeka, Kansas City, and Johnson County.

This organization is rooted in diverse faith traditions, who find common ground in values of justice and fairness. Since 1982, DART has trained over 10,000 community leaders and 270 professional community organizers, who together have greatly impacted their communities. Through the years, various affiliates worked on impactful solutions for their community concerning affordable housing, improving public transportation, job training, expanding health care, criminal justice, and public education.

### **Ways to Learn More About "Justice Together?"**

At our business meeting on Sunday, December 3, some of Hope's JUSTICE TOGETHER team members reported on what has been done so far to support JUSTICE TOGETHER, and what we would like to do in the near future. One way to find answers to any questions is to visit with any of the leadership team for Hope. They are Brenda Glanzer Lilliston, Joanna and Randy Pinkerton, Lowell Birkey, Marcus Loganbill, Wendy Wiens, Jared Regehr, and Vicki Howard.

Another way to become better informed and learn more about the DART process (Direct Action and Research Training), is to visit the DART website: <https://thedartcenter.org/>. Currently, JUSTICE TOGETHER staff are working on updating our information on the DART website. However, the website is full of examples of how this model of faith-based organizing has been used by other faith communities throughout the U.S., and the results are incredible.

**Why do we believe that joining a Justice Ministry is important?** *"God has told you what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God."* Micah 6:8 JUSTICE TOGETHER seeks to address the **"to do justice"** part of this verse. **"Loving kindness"** is also interpreted as showing mercy, we do well. We naturally care for others through our ministries with Family Promise, Sandwich Saturday, raising money to help MCC projects, etc. In addition, **"walking humbly with our God"** is lived out by worshiping with our fellow believers, studying the Bible together, etc. But doing justice is more difficult.

A definition of justice is that justice asks "why" there is a situation like trashy houses and seeks to find a way to correct or change the why, like passing ordinances to make dumping trash in houses illegal. Justice is not about just cleaning up one house, but making sure the house doesn't get trashed again, then cleaned, and trashed again. It is looking at the systemic source of the issue. We cannot make systemic changes on our own. We need the power of organized people working together. JUSTICE TOGETHER builds people power **"to do justice."**

**Do any other ministries we are already involved in ask us to sign a Covenant?** We have not signed a Covenant with other ministries. In signing a covenant with JUSTICE TOGETHER, our church "promises" we are going to uphold our

end of the agreement. It amounts to more than our Witness and Outreach Commission or some other church entity saying - we're going to support Ministry XYZ without any real concrete commitments. Instead of just giving lip service to our support, we have some solid commitment, feet on the ground, hands in the mud, fingers in our pocketbook, showing up and being there.

**Why a covenant, what is different about this ministry?** The covenant represents Hope's commitment to the JUSTICE TOGETHER initiative and that means: attending the four meetings like we said we would, showing up for leadership meetings, and stepping forward to represent Hope on the board and other committees.

During our Listening Sessions at Hope, 49 individuals have signed up to be part of the JUSTICE TOGETHER network. Those individuals committed to attending four meetings if at all possible. Those meetings are: Community Problems sAssembly (Nov. 9), Solutions Briefing (April 11), Nehemiah Action (May 9) and Celebration and Fund Raising (June 20).

*In addition, for the Nehemiah Action when we meet with community leaders on May 9, each Justice network member is asked to bring three additional people. In this way, the power of the people will show community leaders our commitment to doing justice. **We challenge Justice Team members to make plans to attend on May 9 and consider who they will bring with them. Can we get 150 people to attend who will show the power of the people?***

**What does signing the Covenant do for us? And for the ministry that would otherwise not happen?**

By signing the covenant, Hope will:

- Get training and support from our local leaders within the organization. Those trainings will focus on research, action, and building power. Training may also take on the task of sharing problems, assisting with effective communication, and proposing solutions.
- Hold two seats on JUSTICE TOGETHER's Board of Directors, and make leaders within our congregation eligible to serve in the role of an officer.
- Be ensured of voting privileges for our congregants in JUSTICE TOGETHER Assemblies.
- Have a designated, full-time staff person to support our lay leaders in building this ministry among our congregants.
- Accept responsibility for the financial health of the organization by contributing annually and by supporting fundraising efforts. Starting in 2024, there will be a request for a partnering contribution. The goal is that it be 1% of a congregation's operating revenue from the previous year. If our congregation's partnering contribution is not 1% of our operating revenue, they invite us to plan to increase our contribution to reach the 1% goal over the next 2-5 years.

**If we sign, is there a term? At some point can we step away?** There are no terms. If at any time Hope decides that we no longer wish to participate in JUSTICE TOGETHER, we make it known to the board and the staff, and we drop the ministry.

**Do we need to have a leadership team at Hope that is committed for the same length of time as the term of the Covenant?** For as long as we are a part of the JUSTICE TOGETHER ministry, we should have a leadership team in place at Hope. It does not have to be the same people from year to year. The leadership team's size varies from church to church depending on membership.

**Will the 3 annual processes require congregational time which we currently don't provide for? Or is this a leadership team commitment?**

The three annual processes: 1) listening process; 2) research-to-action process; 3) investment drive process

This is a leadership team commitment but involves everyone who has signed up to be a part of the Justice network (those who said "yes" after our initial listening sessions). Although these three processes will take place each year, they will evolve and take on a slightly different format as we move through the process of addressing the issues we have identified. For example, our next listening session, (next fall) will not have the objective of identifying new justice issues. We will still be working on homelessness and mental health. By that time, we will have identified problems, will be developing more specific plans for interventions/solutions, and seeking other types of input.

**Does the "investment drive process" mean fund-raising? Would this be in addition to our budgeted giving? Would it be internal to our congregation?** In essence, yes - the investment drive process is raising money and yes this would be in addition to our budgeted giving. It would be internal to those in our congregation within the network, but could also include the entire congregation.

In addition, there will be plans for grant writing and seeking donations. The organization realizes that funds beyond the 1.0% from the congregations will be required. DART, and therefore JUSTICE TOGETHER, does not go after large corporate donors. Having a large donor gives too much power to an outside entity and may take away from the mission of supporting



faith communities. JUSTICE TOGETHER wishes to keep the power with the people of faith. Asking for smaller donations from individuals in the network gives another way of showing one's commitment to our quest for justice. With that said, no one is **required** to make donations. Network members, members of church leadership teams, and board members are **not required** to make extra donations.

**Below is the actual covenant that we will be voting on in our January congregational meeting. Please prayerfully review. Thank you for your time and interest!**

### **Covenant with JUSTICE TOGETHER**

We, the undersigned, enter our individual faith communities into covenant, so that together, we can successfully practice our values in the world. We will support the goals of Justice Together to do justice in Sedgwick County, Kansas area, and understand our specific commitment to be as follows:

- \*Build a Justice Network/ ("Rodef Tzedek" – Pursuers of Justice) in our faith community for the purpose of strengthening our ministries among; our members and our community;
- \*Involve a broad representation of our faith community in three annual processes: The listening process, research-to-action process, & the investment drive process;
- \*Accept responsibility for the financial health of the organization by contributing annually and by supporting fundraising efforts;
- \*Select two representatives and one alternate to the Board of Directors who will attend regular meetings;
- \*Work for the common good on unifying issues selected by its members at the Annual Assembly.

### **January 2024 Reminders...**

#### **Worship**

January 7

Worship-Connie

Scripture-Jim V.

Pianist-Ruthie

Song-Lowell

Tech-Scott

Host-Brenda

January 14

Worship-Connie

Scripture-Randy P.

Pianist-Cynthia

Song-Treva

Tech-Mike V.

Host-Lee

January 21

Worship-Kendal

Scripture-Linda H.

Pianist-Laurie

Song-Trae

Tech-Randy P.

Host-Kendal/Marjie

January 28

Worship-Kendal

Scripture-Jerold

Pianist-Vicki

Song-Galen

Tech-Michelle

Host-Barb

#### **Sanctuary Prep**

January 7-Connie

January 14-Lori M.

January 21-Russ

January 28-Ruthie

#### **Nursery**

January 7-Kevin & Taylor

January 14-Tyler & Shelby

January 21-Val & Mike

January 28-Jordon & Emily

#### **Coffee**

January 7-Mike & Kim

January 14-Marcus & Cynthia

January 21-Chris B.

January 28-Congregational Meal/Care & Nurture

#### **Greeters**

January 7-Eldon & Annette


January 14-Greg & Leah

January 21-Margaret

January 28-Greg & Dawn



# January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b> <i>Happy New Year!</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Kevin Sechrist	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Kendra Gooden Mick & Kathleen Lehman	<b>6</b> Michelle Jantz
	Family Promise Hosting week thru January 7		7:00pm Choir			Sandwich Saturday
<b>7</b> Dawn Epp	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
Music Committee		7:00pm Worship	6:00pm Inquiry 7:00pm Choir	7:00pm Vision Council		
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Ron Headings	<b>16</b> Jason Jantz	<b>17</b> Jordan Regehr	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
			6:00pm Inquiry 7:00pm Choir			
<b>21</b> Russ Ronnebaum Mike & Kim Voth	<b>22</b> Karen Zehr	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Isabelle Jantz	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Russ Gooden
12-5pm Reserved Event			6:00pm Inquiry			
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Riley Sechrist Isaac Epp	<b>30</b> Katrina Miller Josh Gooden	<b>31</b>			
Annual Meeting			6:00pm Inquiry			



*Happy New Year!*

