

HOPE HEADLINES

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Randy's Ramblings

I remember when I was first invited to participate. I wasn't even sure what it was, but I knew it had potential to be something extraordinary. As vague as the invitation was, I knew it was a good thing. But it didn't make sense to accept the invitation.

I still wasn't sure what it was. It wasn't a protest movement. It was an organization that was trying to make changes in our community, incremental changes addressing issues too large for one congregation to tackle, based on a model that has worked in other places. Even though I knew I couldn't participate, I was intrigued.

Then I got another invitation. And then another. I was still trying to figure out what my routine at Hope Mennonite Church would be, but pastors (some I knew, some I did not; some were United Methodist, some were Mennonite) were inviting me to participate in what would later be known as Justice Together. I eventually gave an answer, one that I still believe was the right answer. I said it was not the right time for us to participate. We needed to work through our grief first.

Then a few months later, after the intense grief work was behind us, some people at Hope received their own invitations, and we began an amazing journey of partnering with other faith communities to address injustices in Sedgwick County.

It seemed a daunting task to undertake, but I've watched in amazement as a team of people at Hope joined this emerging organization. We began by listening to stories, lots of stories. Thousands of stories. Those stories were then summarized into 10 different categories; from that list 2 issues were identified as the most urgent needs: Homelessness and Mental Health. Following some intense research of each topic, specific actions were identified as the best next step in meeting the needs of our community.

On May 9th, Justice Together will hold what they call a Nehemiah Action Assembly at Century II. Members of the Wichita City Council as well as the Sedgwick County Commissioners have been invited. Two people from Justice Together will meet with these elected officials on the stage and ask them about the issues and present the findings from our research. They will also ask for two specific things for each issue.

It will be implied, if not overtly stated, that the people in attendance support those actions. And that's where I know my answer is now a "yes." I will be there. And it's why I want to encourage you to be there, too! I know the more people in the room, the more likely the specific requests will be taken seriously. The more people who are there to show their support, the more likely action will be taken.

Following the model from other cities, we will start the process over again with listening sessions, naming issues, focusing on one or two, researching them and developing concrete, specific actions to present again.

I remember when I was first invited to participate. I wasn't even sure what it was, but I knew it had potential to be something extraordinary. And I'm excited to be a part of it!

“Sorrow”

In 2017, when he was nearly 51 years old, my brother Nathan and his significant other were found dead on the floor in their home. They had been shot. The evidence and subsequent police investigation suggested that my brother shot his significant other and then himself.

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Sorrow

In the afternoon after they were found dead, my dad, visibly shaken and broken, walked into my office to tell me the news. I then contacted my youngest brother and my sister to inform them of the deaths and began assisting with the work of the next steps. In my role as the oldest sibling and in a leadership role at work, I put on my leadership armor and compartmentalized my own pain, confusion and disbelief into a bundle to consider later. When the funeral was over and the family had all gone back to their routines, I was exhausted and unable to process this unbelievable, irreconcilable event.

Sometime later, when I was at home alone, I sat down at the piano and let the emotions of pain, grief, loss



and confusion, questions, bewilderment, and anger express themselves in music.

The composition, “Sorrow”, was the result. As I played and composed, the music

became an expression of the emotions as well as of the memories of his gentle, protective and loving characteristics – his smile, voice, hugs, laugh, his care for his children and special nieces and nephews, and his love for his friends and family.

The tune and chord progressions came quickly in response to these emotions and memories. When I played it for Leon and then my family, they agreed - the music gave voice to feelings for which words were not adequate. My hope with sharing it in settings where grief and confusion are part of the service, others will experience the music as soulful and a compassionate voice that speaks of and to their own brokenness, losses and griefs.

It was an honor to share this on piano, as composed, for Maundy Thursday and then as an arrangement including Hopeful Blues in the somber early Easter morning reflection before the service proceeded into resurrection celebration.

~Trevia Greaser – composer’s note

In the afternoon after they were found dead, my dad, visibly shaken and broken, walked into my office to tell me the news.



JUSTICE TOGETHER

YOU'RE INVITED to the most important night for justice in Sedgwick County!

WHAT: Justice Together 2024 Nehemiah Assembly

WHEN: Thursday, May 9th, 2024

6:00 pm (doors open at 5:30 pm)

WHERE: Century II Convention Hall, 225 W Douglas

General Directions:

- Please arrive early- the event will start promptly at 6 -.
- We will be in the Century II Convention Hall; doors are on the Southwest side of the building.
- This is a ticketed event. Tickets are free and extras will be available at the door.

At Hope, tickets will be available after worship in the fellowship hall on April 28 and May 5.

- Congregations will be seated together.

Parking

- Onsite ADA parking is free, and other onsite parking is a \$5 flat rate using the ParkMobile app. Free parking in designated locations.
- Carpooling is encouraged and **we will offer options closer to the event.**

Brochures are available on the literature table by the front door.

View "Issues Briefings" and "Raising the Heat" Presentation at: <https://youtu.be/AWxz8zbwxi4>

If you have any questions, feel free to talk to any one of Hope's Justice Leadership Team:

~Lowell Birkey, Vicki Howard, Brenda Glanzer Lilliston, Marcus Loganbill, Randy and Joanna Pinkerton, Jared Regehr, and Wendy Wiens.

Testing the waters with different Newsletter formats...

I'm going to be trying Newsletter formats as time allows when newsletters come out. Items that may be interesting to include in newsletters:

- A blog. Doesn't anyone have an interest in doing this? Health and wellness, parenting, aging. Subjects along that line.
- Pictures of events involving Hope
- Book reviews from Hope's Library
- Commissions news

~Kim Voth



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES

December 17, 2023
Hailey Heide Stucky
Wichita State University
Doctorate of Nursing Practice

May 10
Elisha Miller
Butler Community College
Associate of Science Biology

Contact Us

Hope Mennonite Church
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Wichita, KS
316-722-0903
www.hopemennonite.org

May 11
Alex Epp
William Jewell College
Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering & minor in Business Administration

May 18
Randy Quinn's grandson
Trace Woolery
Chanute High School



A Cuppa Hope coffee shop will be open on May 5 prior to worship and during our fellowship time. Proceeds go toward our Fall Festival. Donations appreciated.

