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# HOPE HEADLINES

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## Digging in the dirt

Digging is one of my favorite activities. My yard always has piles of dirt from past or current digging projects that will become their own projects in due time. When personal or political stress is especially high, I dig to discharge that stress from my body.

Give me an insurrection and I'll create rain gardens and a mini-orchard in my front yard. Give me a husband and two new stepsons, and I'll add new beds in the front and back yards. Give me a new job and an upcoming graduation, and I might just prepare the backyard for a new patio!

When it comes to people and churches, I also like to dig in the dirt—not digging *for* dirt, such as gossip, rumors or bad news, but digging *in* the dirt for what is underneath the surface that gives life to what we can see aboveground, digging *in* the dirt to make room for the manure that will nourish the roots. I like to understand *why* people and organizations and systems are the way they are, what hopes and fears (the underground stuff) motivate them to speak and behave the ways they do (the aboveground stuff).

In the gospel of Luke 13:6-9, Jesus tells a parable about a young fig tree that isn't bearing fruit yet. The property owner is dismayed that after three years the tree still isn't making figs. The gardener begs on the tree's behalf for one more year, and promises to "dig around it and put manure on it." That's my kind of gardener!

This gardener is digging in the dirt to promote life. This gardener is digging to preserve the life of the tree and to nurture it so it can bear fruit. This gardener is an advocate for the tree to the landowner whose patience is limited and whose vision is only for short-term gain.

My hope is that my "digging" here at Hope as interim pastor these next months will also promote life. My hope is that we will find ways to nourish the soil of our life together so that we continue to bear fruit. My hope is that our work together will foster patience and a long-range vision for God's way among and beyond us.

I've begun attending various commission and committee meetings to see what's "underground" at Hope, and I have enjoyed my first two worship services, observing what is "aboveground" at Hope. I welcome your calls and visits and invitations to learn to know you better.

May we dig in the dirt together to promote life, growth and service in Christ's name.

~~Sara Dick

## VISION COUNCIL -AUGUST MINUTES

### Meeting Summary

**Meeting Date:** August 15, 2024

1. **Welcome/Opening:** Michelle Jantz opened the meeting. Sara Dick provided an opening prayer.

**2. Next Meetings:**

a. September 24, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

b. October: TBD

c. November: Tentative November 19 7:00 p.m.

3. **Minutes:** The minutes from the June 2024 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Discussion: The group discussed the existing guidance found in the Constitution and Bylaws regarding the formation of committees and Vision Council support to identifying committee

members. It was acknowledged that these policies need to be revisited and will be done as part the bylaws review for the December 2024 congregational meeting.

4. **Treasurer's Report** – the June and July financials were reviewed and approved

a. Discussion on the management of the Community Bible order. The suggestion was made to use the Library Special Fund. It is anticipated to have additional funds due to discounted shipping rates related to the volume Hope submitted in the order. A request was made to retain any additional funds for use in library investments. Vision Council will follow up at the next meeting.

**5. Commission Reports**

a. **Care and Nurture** – Congregational Meal on 8/18/24 and Church Retreat 10/26 and 27

b. **Discipleship** –

i. Child Protection Policy reviewed, and the commission recommends volunteer training to occur every two years. Vision Council approved this change.

ii. The library continues to receive three new books per quarter from Herald Press. Recent additions include History of Mennonites in Ukraine, and several books related to creation care.

c. **Witness and Outreach** - updates on existing mission activities were provided.

d. **Worship**

i. Creation Series September – October 2024

ii. Bethel Sunday – making contacts to schedule some time in the fall

iii. Plans for Playground dedication on September 8.

iv. August 25th – School kit blessing and Vacation Bible School performance

**6. Pastor's Report Sara** reported she was settling in after a week and a half

a. Interview with Ministerial Leadership Alliance scheduled for the following week to reactivate Sara's credentials. Kathy Neufeld-Dunn will represent the congregation.

b. Sara asked questions about responsibilities for Small Groups. After discussion, the group concurred that it is important to ensure new regular attendees have an option to learn about the various small groups in the congregation and be given the opportunity to join a group. It was also suggested that meeting with the different small groups might be an effective way for Sara to get to know the congregation.

**7. Moderator's Report** – Michelle's items are all covered in the New Business.

**8. New Business and Strategic Priorities**

a. **December Congregational Meeting** will be December 8th (December 1st is Thanksgiving Weekend)

b. **Budget Cycle** planning will begin earlier this year. Commissions will be asked to submit budget considerations by September 17th. The September 24th Vision Council will review a draft budget. Tentative final budget review scheduled for November 19 VC meeting.

c. **Discernment** – Vision Council reviewed the open positions for Discernment.

i. Care and Nurture VC Rep must be filled – affirmed a candidate

ii. Worship VC Rep – this position will need to be filled. Candidate identified.

iii. Three VC positions are ending, and incumbents are eligible for another term. All three have agreed to continue.

iv. Looking ahead, four positions will need to be filled for terms beginning 2025. These include two positions on Stewardship, one position on Witness and Outreach and one position on Care and Nurture.

v. Seven additional positions on commissions are ending and the individuals are eligible for an additional term.

vi. Treasurers' tenure on Vision Council will end next year, and Vision Council will need to discern a new treasurer early enough to ensure transition planning through the 2026 budget cycle preparation.

vii. A suggestion was made to implement a call for nominations for commission and Vision Council positions. The group agreed to execute this activity in September.

viii. It is anticipated that the September and October Vision Council meetings will tend to discernment needs and activities.

d. **Columbarium** – The Memorial Garden policy to reflect that Vision Council will review and approve refunds.

e. **Tech in Sanctuary** – Vision Council reviewed information from the Tech Committee regarding quotes for updating the projection solutions in the sanctuary. Quotes included cost for infrastructure installation, front video monitor options, rear monitor, and mobile controls. A time during a Sunday School hour will be identified to discern the proposal's cost and monitor placement. Michelle will work with the Tech Committee and Worship to plan the session.

i. Additional discussion occurred about the implementation of handrails to help access the stage. Michelle will follow up with Scott Luty regarding installing a handrail in a style congruent with the decor of the sanctuary.

f. **Social Events** – the group discussed the status of the strategic priority of Social Events. It was agreed that this is a priority never complete. Suggestions included Vision Council could pass a resolution that a variety of Social Events remain a priority at Hope. Care and Nurture reported that they continue to plan a variety of events, including looking at events away from the church building. The list of individuals interested in supporting the priority of social events has been shared with Care and Nurture. Vision Council will follow-up on the resolution idea or continued steps to future VC meeting or Congregational Meeting

g. **Creation Care** – The group discussed tentative next steps in movement on this strategic priority due to the sermon delivered on July 28, 2024. Generally, the group agreed a Creation Care committee would be needed to develop options and activities. It was noted that a quote had been solicited for solar panels for information purposes. Vision Council will follow-up on commissioning a committee to future VC meeting.

9. **Adjournment** – the meeting was closed with a prayer from Sara Dick and the meeting was adjourned.



Are you concerned about pesticide residue levels on your fruits and vegetables? Or perhaps this is new information to you?

Nearly 75% of non-organic fresh produce sold in the U.S. contains residues of potentially harmful pesticides and fungicides. The Dirty Dozen is a list of produce (see [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)) ranked as the most heavily sprayed produce. If not buying organic, it is helpful to wash the produce in baking soda.

Since we often serve fresh fruits and vegetables at Hope for meals and snacks, please help yourself to the quart jar of baking soda under the east sink. It is labeled with the appropriate ratio of baking soda to water depending on your quantity of produce. This is an easy and inexpensive routine to implement that will decrease your body's toxic burden.

**Care and Nurture News**

Watch for more details coming but plan on September 8 as a special service when the new playground will be dedicated. We will have a kid-friendly picnic style lunch to commemorate the fun. We asking the congregation to help by bringing a vegetable or fruit side or dessert. Please sign up on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall or contact the church office.



You are invited to join the choir. This month we will rehearse on August 28, September 4 & 11 and sing on September 15. Come to 1,2 or 3 rehearsals as your schedule permits.



**September Reminders**

**Worship**

*September 1*  
Worship-Kendal  
Scripture-Leslie  
Pianist-Amy  
Song-Steve P.  
Tech-Scott  
Host-Brenda

*September 8*  
Worship-Kendal  
Scripture-Leah  
Pianist-Vicki  
Song-Galen  
Tech-Mike V.  
Host-Lee

*September 15*  
Worship-Connie  
Scripture-Lori R.  
Pianist-Laurie  
Song-Trae  
Tech-Randy P.  
Host-Kendal/Marjie

*September 22*  
Worship-Renetta  
Scripture-Donna H.  
Pianist-Cynthia  
Song-Lowell  
Tech-Michelle  
Host-Barb

*September 29*  
Worship-Renetta  
Scripture-Vicki H.  
Pianist-Vicki H.  
Song-Steve  
Tech-Galen  
Host-Renetta

**Mowers**  
Sept 1- Jerold  
Sept 8-Randy G.  
Sept 15-Travis  
Sept 22-Grant  
Sept 29-Jim B.

**Greeters**

September 1-Heidi J; Natalie H.  
September 8; 15; 22; 29-TBA  
No schedule yet

**Memorial Garden**

Sept 1-7-Joanna  
Sept 8-21-Ruthie  
Sept 22-30-Heidi

**Sanctuary prep**

Sept 1-Joanna  
Sept 8- Connie  
Sept 15-Lori M.  
Sept 22-Russ G.  
Sept 29-Ruthie

**Coffee**

Sept-1-NO Coffee  
Sept 8-Chris B.  
Sept 15-Scott & Connie  
Sept 22-Cindy  
Sept 29-Mike & Kim

**Nursery**

Sept 1-Mike & Val  
Sept 8-Shelby & Tyler  
Sept 15-Jordon & Emily  
Sept 22-Kevin & Taylor  
Sept 29-Eldon & Annette