
HOPE HEADLINES

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A Good Word

Interim pastor Sara Dick

In mid-October I completed a six-session course on Congregations in Transition with Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. It was chock-full of good information, good theology and good tools a pastor can use with a congregation in transition.

I wasn't hired at Hope as a transition pastor, in part because I wasn't trained to be one yet, and in part because the congregation was already well on its way to finding a new settled pastor. Hallelujah! Also, this church's transition has been unconventional in significant ways, beginning with the tragic death of Pastor Dave two years ago.

In my AMBS class, I learned about a congregation's transitional journey—a process that helps churches move from the departure of one settled pastor to the welcome of the next one. Here are the congregation's focus points recommended by my instructors for that transitional time:

1. **Heritage:** review how the congregation was formed and shaped
2. **Mission:** clarify identity & discern vision
3. **Connections:** relationships beyond congregation
4. **Leadership:** watch for new leaders/review organizational structure
5. **Future:** apply what is learned in developing congregational profile for search

I'll share reflections on the first two focus points here, and in the coming months, I'll look at the remaining focus points.

Heritage:

Hope hasn't dug into its heritage recently, and I wonder if next year's 40th anniversary could be a time to retell the church's story—from its origins in small groups through the building project and its establishment years to today.

How might the church want to celebrate God's faithfulness through these 40 years? What conflicts or pains might need to be named, addressed and healed? These questions can be considered while still in transition and/or once a new settled pastor is called. I imagine this would be a rich and encouraging task for this church!

Mission:

The instructors define mission by asking three questions:

1. Who are we and why do we exist? (clarify identity & purpose)
2. Where are we headed? (discern vision/direction)
3. How will we get there? (establish specific, measurable 2- or 3-year goals)

The first question is answered in Hope's purpose statement: "As an Anabaptist community of faith empowered by the Holy Spirit, Hope Mennonite Church is calling and making disciples who bring Christ's love and peace to our world." While this statement is a few decades old (I think), it still has life in it to guide and inspire the congregation if it is periodically reviewed, revised as necessary, and reaffirmed. Perhaps more alive in the mind and heart of the congregation as their identity is the welcome statement that was written and affirmed by the church just a few years ago—a powerful, prayerful and sometimes painful process of discernment and clarification.

Where is Hope Mennonite Church headed? I'm new and don't feel like I know how the church would answer the second question yet. Do you feel like you could answer it? I'd love to hear from you what you see as Hope's vision and direction for the next five to ten years!

The third question is answered, at least in part, by the strategic priorities identified in the recent congregational review: radical hospitality, creation care, tech in worship, support groups, communication plan, social events, and Bible and book studies. These priorities are being taken up as the congregation has time and energy to do so, while also doing most "business as usual" and searching for a new settled pastor. This has made for a very busy church over the past year and a half!

If you see things differently from what I've shared here, I hope you'll visit with me. I'd love to hear your take on Hope's recent engagement with its heritage and its mission, whether you're a newcomer or long-timer!



The season of Advent begins on December 1. We will be looking for more people than usual

to help with the worship services – candlelighters, extra readers, children’s stories, special music. In addition, we will hold our Longest Night service on December 21 and our Christmas Eve service. Look for requests in the next weeks and consider how you can participate in this special time of the church year...anticipating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



SPENDING PLAN UPDATES

Beginning this month, Hope will provide weekly updates on our 2024 spending plan to use for any of your end-of-year giving.

The information will be found in the bulletin and also go out each week with the sharing.



Justice Together News

Listening Sessions for Justice Together conclude at the end of October. You can still give your input and join Hope Mennonite’s Justice Together network by contacting Brenda Glanzer Lilliston, Wendy Wiens, or Grace Parker Sutter, our Justice Together coordinating team. Thanks to Hope Mennonite for your willingness to participate in this year-old Wichita organization that seeks to address systemic problems in our community and county.

The Justice Together Office staff is compiling and analyzing responses from the all-participating faith communities Listening Sessions to come up with a list of issues weighing heaviest on people’s hearts.

The next step is the 2024 Justice Together Community Problems Assembly on Thursday, November 7, at 6PM at the First United Methodist Church (330 N Broadway, Wichita).

All Hope Justice Network members are encouraged to attend if possible. The top three or four issues gathered from the Listening Session will be listed on a ballot. This vote will determine the priorities focused on in 2025. The Justice Together Board has decided that Homelessness will continue to be one issue of focus. But another 1 or 2 issues need to be selected by the November 7 vote.



We are looking for someone to assist as a co-coordinator for Family Promise. We

have three coordinators at Hope. We share some tasks, but each position also has specific duties. Following are the responsibilities of the position we are seeking. Please see Marcus Loganbill if you have questions or are interested.

Purchaser/Inventory Position

- 1.(alternating with Aldersgate) – will purchase food items and stock cabinets, kitchen area, and refrigerator; this will involve a mid-week inventory to see what else might be needed (i.e. fresh fruit can be used quickly and spoils quickly)
- 2.(alternating with Aldersgate) – will purchase gift cards (usually Walmart) and welcome card used to welcome our guests each hosting period
3. attend FP graduations and purchase gift or gift card for graduates (again alternating with Aldersgate)
- 4.serve as the point person for setting up on the first day of hosting week
- 5.maintain inventory of items in FP cabinets on lower level – diapers, first-aid, light bulbs, blankets, sheets, towels/wash cloths, area rugs, misc. supplies
6. be willing to fill in for volunteers who have conflicts or emergencies during hosting week
7. fill the role of “coordinator on duty” and open the church once or twice at 5:45 pm during our hosting week
8. attend FP graduations when possible



The following books have been added to our library.
—Believers’ Church Bible Commentary series:

- Hebrews
- Lamentations/Song of Solomon
- Deuteronomy
- Ecclesiastes
- John
- 1 & 2 Chronicles
- Joshua
- 1 & 2 Timothy/Titus
- Joel/Obadiah/Micah,

—Tending Tomorrow: courageous change for people and planet by Leah Reesor-Keller

—The New Anabaptist: practices for emerging communities by Stuart Murray

—Prodigal Gospel: getting lost and found again in the Good News by Jonny Morrison

—Uncomplicated: simple secrets for a compelling life by Brenda Yoder

—The Stranger in the Lifeboat by Mitch Albom

—Radical & Reformers: a survey of global Anabaptist history by Troy Osborne

—The Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown

VISION COUNCIL NEWS-September minutes

Vision Council recognizes that transparency is important for the congregation. Moving forward Vision Council minutes will be published in the newsletter, once approved. Below are the approved minutes from September 24, 2024.

Present: Lowell Birkey, Renetta Gooden, Natalie Hand, Jerold Heide, Michelle Jantz-Moderator, Tyler & Shelby Kaufman, Sara Dick-Pastor, Lori Regier, Chris Teufel, Margaret Wiebe

Hope One Drive Folder: [09 Sep VC](#)

GATHERING

Welcome – Pastor Sara

- Opening Prayer before the Meeting #953

Next Meeting – Michelle Jantz

- October 22, 7pm at Hope Mennonite Church; Jerold won't be in attendance.

RECEIVING

Minutes

- August minutes approved as presented.

August 2024 Financial Highlights

Offering

- YTD offering of approximately \$139,000 – down \$10,000 vs prior yr
- Hope Home rental income was received totaling \$350 – this amount was subsequently transferred to the Hope Home SF from the Stewardship portion of the spending plan

Vision Council

- Paid out monthly expenses of \$2,958 – no monthly pastoral expenses paid during August

Care and Nurture

- Paid out \$327 related to fellowship meals

Discipleship

- Paid out \$145 related to Bible purchases (Library) – any leftover funds after reimbursements will go towards the Library

Stewardship

- Paid out \$5,308 during the month

- Paid out recurring monthly expenses related to custodial, copier, website hosting, telephone/internet, QuickBooks and building utilities
- Paid out \$2,200 related to building maintenance and repairs – Fahnstock service agreement and elevator maintenance and testing
- Distributed \$350 from Hope Home Spending Plan to Hope Home SF (Hope Home rental income)

Witness and Outreach

- Paid out \$525 for Returning Citizens, Sandwich Saturday and Family Promise

Worship Commission

- Paid out \$515 for worship materials and \$450 for guest speakers

Special Funds (SF)

- Paid out \$618 from Convention SF for convention related expenses
- Paid out \$850 from Memorial Garden as a return of initial deposits (Discussed in the prior VC meeting)
- Paid out net \$121 from Family Promise SF – Valeria van donation less actual check/withdrawal
- Hope Home and Vision Council Discretionary SF received monthly distributions from Spending Plan.

COMMISSION REPORTS

Care & Nurture – Lori Regier

- Playground dedication was September 8. We hosted a fun picnic.
- C&N will be hosting a chili cook-off Wednesday 9/25 followed by peppernut baking.
- Another Hope Friends meal is scheduled for October 16 followed by peppernut baking.
- Church Retreat this year will only be on Sunday October 27 due to retreat center renovation.

Discipleship – Margaret Wiebe

- Discipleship Commission has requested no changes from the 2024 budget for the 2025 budget.
- Sunday school classes began Sunday, Sept 15



Stewardship – Jerold Heide

Witness & Outreach – Lowell Birkey

- Our commission met on September 11th. Most of our discussions revolved around our budget and committee structure (-knowing that Clinton, chairperson, has reached his 6 yr “limit” on the commission).
- As will come out in our budget proposal, we will recommend “dropping” one local line item and adding another and will recommend some shifting of money among several other line items in our budget.
- We talked about some “new” local agencies that we would like to gather more information about as we think about supporting, in some manner, their community endeavors.
- As far as committee membership and make up is concerned, we have 2 individuals that we would like to recommend to discernment for consideration— one recommendation would change the commission’s liaison with Vision Council. We also talked about the feasibility or possibility of adding a 5th member to our commission-and have a recommendation for that person. (discussion point for VC)
- Upcoming “projects:
 - CROP Walk in October
 - Humankind coat drive
 - Supporting the “Bethel College” Sunday on Nov.17th by adding \$500 to the designated gifts from that Sunday (from our 2023 budget surplus monies

Worship – Chris Teufel

Pastor’s Report – Sara

Highlights:

- Preached first three sermons, including two to begin the Season of Creation worship series
- Playground dedication and acknowledgement of second anniversary of Pastor Dave's death
- Began visits to those with difficulty attending worship in person
- Attended wedding reception for Natalie and Jared at Hope
- Ate supper with Family Promise volunteers and participants

- Began AMBS class on transitional ministry
- Attended Bethel College/Bethel College Mennonite Church Peace Lecture events
- Met with spiritual director (I do this monthly)
- Met with WDC interim and transitional pastors’ group
- Met with Wichita Mennonite church pastors Met with college student considering congregational ministry
- Met with WDC Ministerial Leadership Commission for credential reactivation interview - successful!
- Concluded one-year Roots of Justice coaching group for white leaders working at antiracist change
- Met weekly with pastoral colleague for Jesuit practice of the Examen (ongoing)

Coming up:

- Continue visiting folks unable to participate in person
- Continue Season of Creation worship series
- Continue AMBS class (ends October 16)
- Consider offering class for new attenders this fall
- Start reviewing secretary and pastor job descriptions with VC, as time and interest allow
- Start reviewing policies with VC, as time and interest allow

Reflections:

In church and community systems, I love to learn and I love to help solve problems, so this AMBS class on transitional ministry is very exciting for me. It is not, however, the mandate I have from this congregation—to do transitional ministry work—so I am holding it lightly as I learn. My current goal as interim pastor at Hope is to be a cheerleader and resource for the challenges you ask for my help in facing, as well as attending to the "main ministry tasks" outlined in my MOU: preaching, visitation, and support for VC, moderator, deacons, worship, staff, PCRC and the search committee. Those are the tasks connections I've sought out so far—as well as those I find helpful in general, such as connecting with other local Mennonite pastors.

I see exciting and interesting things happening in other areas of the church, but I am working to discipline my attention and activities so I can carry out your requested responsibilities well.

In these months ahead, I ask for your grace AND your feedback if you feel I'm straying from what this church most needs from me at this time. I have my own passions and pet peeves, and I offer those as gifts where they can be received as such, but they aren't necessarily the church's passions or pet peeves. You all have welcomed me well, and I hope we continue to learn and grow together in these months that I'll be serving as your interim pastor.

NEW BUSINESS

Spending Plan – Highlights (see OneDrive for additional details)

Offering - Increased by \$10k (up 4%)

Vision Council – annualized based on 2024 YTD

- Annualized based on current
- VC Special Fund - down from \$15k to \$2.5k with a 2024 balance of \$25k
- Convention Registration – left at \$1,500

Care & Nurture

- \$500 increase for Retreats & Fellowship Meals

Discipleship – No Change

Stewardship - up \$10k overall

- Small increase/month for custodial
- Office Exp – down based on 3-year avg
- Building Maintenance & Repairs – based on 3-year avg
- Building/House- Ins – 35% increase in second half of 2024. Premium increase and because of claim.
- Building Utilities – used a 3-year avg
- Worker's Comp – unchanged

Technology

- Software - \$2k firewall / Quickbooks web / subscriptions
- HW – new office computer
- Labor – up

LT Maintenance & Tech – steady at \$8k

LT Scholarship – steady at \$3k

LT Hope Home – income set aside for maintenance

Witness & Outreach – Placeholder is an incremental 1%

Worship – same 15 guest speakers / music / worship)

WDC recommends \$150-\$250 per guest

LT Maintenance – includes AV for 2025

Discernment – Natalie (see OneDrive for additional details)

Moderator Report – Michelle (see OneDrive for additional details)

- Draft presentation for Sunday
- We will have a waiting period before voting
- Childcare for Sunday's discussion

OLD BUSINESS

- How do we consider the interim pastor successful?
- Is it time to consider another strategic priority to start in January?
- Small Group Questionnaire – Discuss more in October

SENDING

- Meeting adjourned; Sara prayed us out.

Respectfully submitted,
Renetta Gooden, Secretary

Strategic Priority Update

Vision Council recognizes a strategic priority such as "Social Events" is one that may never have a completion date. As a result, Vision Council has passed the following resolution:

Hope Mennonite Resolution to Maintain a Commitment to Social Events

Whereas, social events play a vital role in fostering community, strengthening relationships, and enhancing the spiritual and social well-being of our congregation;

Whereas, these events provide opportunities for fellowship, outreach, and engagement, aligning with our mission to build a supportive and inclusive church community;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Hope Mennonite Church Vision Council commits to maintaining and supporting a robust calendar of social events for the congregation;

Be it further resolved that Vision Council will allocate necessary resources, including budgetary support and volunteer coordination, to ensure the successful planning and execution of these events;

Be it further resolved that the Vision Council may establish a Social Events Committee as a sub-committee of Care and Nurture Commission that is responsible for organizing and overseeing these activities, ensuring they meet the diverse needs and interests of our congregation;

Be it further resolved that the Vision Council will regularly review and assess the impact of these social

events, seeking feedback from the congregation to continuously improve and adapt our offerings;

Be it finally resolved that this commitment to social events will be communicated to the congregation, encouraging active participation and volunteerism to foster a vibrant and connected church community.

Adopted this 22 of October, 2024, by the Vision Council.



November Reminders...

Sunday Services

November 3-All Saints

Worship-Lori M.
Scripture-Joanna
Pianist-Vicki
Song-Steve
Tech-Scott
Host-Brenda
Children's Story-Kendal

November 10-A Celebration of Hope

Worship-Natalie
Scripture-Chris B.
Pianist-Amy
Song-Trae
Tech-Mike V.
Host-Lee
Children's Story-Lori M.

November 17-Bethel College Sunday

Worship-Natalie
Scripture-Justin
Pianist-Ruthie
Song-Galen
Tech-Michelle
Host-Kendal/Marjie

Children's Story-Katie

November 24-Christ the King

Worship-TBD
Scripture-Lee
Pianist-Laurie
Song-Lowell
Tech-Michelle
Host-Barb
Children's Story-Annette

Sanctuary Prep

Nov 3-Russ
Nov 10-Joanna
Nov 17-Ruthie
Nov 4-Connie

Nursery

Nov 3-Justin & Tiffany
Nov 10-Lori R.; Amy
Nov 17-Ben & Grace
Nov 24-Jared & Natalie R.

Coffee

Nov 3-Marcus & Cynthia
Nov 10-Chris B.
Nov 17-Mike & Kim
Nov 24-Joanna

Mowers

Nov 3-Travis
Nov 10-Grant

Sunday School Superintendent for Nov-Delaine



Uh, thanks...but I said 'Tithes and Offerings.'

A FUNNY GARDEN

It's been said that God first separated the salt water from the fresh water and made dry land, planted a garden, made animals and fish – all before making a human. He made and provided what we would need before we were born. God left us clues as to what foods help different parts of the body!

God's Pharmacy! Amazing!



A sliced Carrot looks like the human eye. The pupil, iris and radiating lines look just like the human eye... and YES, science now shows carrots greatly enhance blood flow to and function of the eyes.



A Tomato has four chambers and is red. The heart has four chambers and is red. All of the research shows tomatoes are loaded with lycopine and are indeed pure heart and blood food.



Grapes hang in a cluster that has the shape of the heart. Each grape looks like a blood cell and all of the research today shows grapes are also profound heart and blood vitalizing food.



A Walnut looks like a little brain, a left and right hemisphere, upper cerebrums and lower cerebellums. Even the wrinkles or folds on the nut are just like the neo-cortex. We now know walnuts help develop more than three (3) dozen neuron-transmitters for brain function.



Kidney Beans actually heal and help maintain kidney function and yes, they look exactly like the human kidneys.



Celery, Bok Choy, Rhubarb and many more look just like bones. These foods specifically target bone strength. Bones are 23% sodium and these foods are 23% sodium. If you don't have enough sodium in your diet, the body pulls it from the bones, thus making them weak. These foods replenish the skeletal needs of the body.



Avocados, Eggplant and Pears target the health and function of the womb and cervix of the female - they look just like these organs. Today's research shows that when a woman eats one avocado a week, it balances hormones, sheds unwanted birth weight, and prevents cervical cancers. And how profound is this? It takes exactly nine (9) months to grow an avocado from blossom to ripened fruit. There are over 14,000 photolytic chemical constituents of nutrition in each one of these foods (modern science has only studied and named about 141 of them).



Figs are full of seeds and hang in twos when they grow. Figs increase the mobility of male sperm and increase the numbers of sperm as well to overcome male sterility.



Sweet Potatoes look like the pancreas and actually balance the glycemic index of diabetics.



Olives assist the health and function of the ovaries



Oranges, Grapefruits, and other Citrus fruits look just like the mammary glands of the female and actually assist the health of the breasts and the movement of lymph in and out of the breasts.



Onions look like the body's cells. Today's research shows onions help clear waste materials from all of the body cells. They even produce tears which wash the epithelial layers of the eyes. A working companion, Garlic, also helps eliminate waste materials and dangerous free radicals from the body.