
HOPE HEADLINES

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“A Good Word”

By Interim Sara Dick

I recently attended an event at Plymouth Congregational Church, and the speaker read this blessing by John O'Donohue that I'd like to share here with you:

For the Interim Time

When near the end of day, life has drained
Out of light, and it is too soon
For the mind of night to have darkened things,

No place looks like itself, loss of outline
Makes everything look strangely in-between,
Unsure of what has been, or what might come.

In this wan light, even trees seem groundless.
In a while it will be night, but nothing
Here seems to believe the relief of darkness.

You are in this time of the interim
Where everything seems withheld.

The path you took to get here has washed out;
The way forward is still concealed from you.

"The old is not old enough to have died away;
The new is still too young to be born."

You cannot lay claim to anything;
In this place of dusk,
Your eyes are blurred;
And there is no mirror.

Everyone else has lost sight of your heart
And you can see nowhere to put your trust;
You know you have to make your own way through.

As far as you can, hold your confidence.
Do not allow confusion to squander
This call which is loosening
Your roots in false ground,
That you might come free
From all you have outgrown.

What is being transfigured here is your mind,
And it is difficult and slow to become new.
The more faithfully you can endure here,

The more refined your heart will become
For your arrival in the new dawn.

I'm sure your confidence has at times faltered as you have loosened your roots from all you have outgrown these many months between settled pastors. And yet here you are, anticipating the arrival later this summer of your next settled pastor Ruth Harder.

The church's "mind" has been transfigured, slowly becoming new as you've grieved pastor Dave's death and moved forward slowly and with difficulty. You have faithfully endured "the interim time," and now you see on the horizon "your arrival in the new dawn." Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

SYMBOLS FOR THE BANNER

The practice of our yearly "Sharing our Hope" banners and symbols recognizes important events in the life of our congregation and began with our founding pastor, Marvin Zehr. You may wonder what the criteria is or what is 'symbol worthy.'

There is a list of automatic symbols – births, deaths, anniversaries in 5-year increments, membership, baptism, graduations, retirements, moving away, etc. We also recognize achievements and events that go beyond the normal in the lives of our regular attenders. Many of those come from information passed on to the church office by others...because after all, we are humble Mennonites and don't normally toot our own horns.

People are invited to place symbols on the banner during our time of sharing. However, there is always the option of having the symbol placed in your mailbox and putting it on when you wish to or to say 'no thanks.' We are also happy to include information in our monthly newsletters as an alternate way of sharing.

This is just another way that our church family can learn about each other and celebrate those important milestones together.

NEWSLETTER CALENDAR INFORMATION

As you are aware, we share birthdays and anniversaries in each month's newsletter; however, we are only as good as the information we are given. If you notice that yours is missing, please send us the

information and we will update our files. This calendar is for regular attendees/members birthdays/anniversaries.



Do you LOVE Mexican food?

Join us for a Tex-Mex Fiesta Lunch Sunday, March 9, 2025, after Sunday School and sponsored by Care and Nurture, just for fun!

Main course is provided. You may join in by bringing fruit or dessert. Please sign up on the bulletin board.

WITNESS & OUTREACH NEWS

Did you know.....

...that Hope Mennonite Church can benefit from purchases at Dillons grocery stores? If shoppers sign up for and use a Shoppers Card (there is no charge to sign up), Dillons donates a certain percentage of the purchases to a charity of the shoppers' choosing. Hope Mennonite Church is one of the charity choices that Dillons shoppers have as they identify a charity they want to benefit from the program.

In the last quarter of 2024, Dillons donated \$230.04 to Hope --stating that there had been 48 households participating in that quarter.

All one must do is go to the Dillons website noted below and create an account (again, free to do), and then identify a charity of their choice (hopefully Hope Mennonite), and then have that card scanned during their purchases at Dillons. The link gives instructions on how to create a digital account and how to link that account to an organizatio

Thank you to those that are already enrolled and in doing so are supporting Hope Mennonite Church Witness and Outreach Commission.

<https://www.dillons.com/i/community/community-rewards>



Ministry Meals at Hope

Have you had a major surgery or illness or experienced the joy (and fatigue) after the birth of a child? Or maybe a tragic event or death in the family has made meal preparation an overwhelming task.

This is the time when Hope volunteers come together to prepare and deliver meals to families to help get them through a challenging time.

We have a group of volunteer cooks (possibly you?) who utilize the "Take Them A Meal" website to sign up to do this very thing! Meals are usually provided for 2 or 3 weeks (either 2 or 3 times per week) for a total of 6

meals. This website allows us to streamline scheduling and allows for dietary restrictions, allergies, timing of meals and other details.

So how do we find out who could benefit from Ministry Meals? Often this will be a Deacon or fellow small group member who notifies the Ministry Meal Coordinator. Then the Ministry Meal Coordinator takes it from there.

A few helpful notes:

- Meals are provided for our regular attenders in need, along with their spouse and minor children if applicable
- The Ministry Meal Coordinator arranges the schedule and contacts the Volunteers who then sign up on the website via a link and a password
- A large pool of volunteers means no one has to volunteer every time

If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help with this ministry, contact Cindy Fast, Ministry Meal Coordinator or one of the other Care and Nurture Committee members: Annette Chlumsky, Connie Luty, Carol Preheim, and Chris Teufel.



Medical Mission Trip

This past January 26-February 2, Lowell and Dianne Birkey had the opportunity to participate in a medical mission trip to the Dominican Republic. This was a group of 43 persons- comprised of 16 providers (MD, DO, CRNA, APRN), 11 nurses, 3 Pharmacists, 2 Techs, and 11 general helpers (aka- those with no medical training). We were divided into 2 groups- a surgery group and a general medicine group. The surgery group set up in a local hospital and ran 3 OR tables. The clinic group set up a clinic in a different town each day. A Dominican dentist and a Dominican ophthalmologist accompanied the clinic team each day.

All patients in both settings received a health education teaching and gospel presentation by our Dominican co-workers.

Although it is not a numbers game, numbers are kept for accountability. In the case of the hospital component, the local hospital received credit for all the surgeries that we performed which resulted in a monetary allowance from the government.

Patients seen in clinic- 553

Health education- 887

Prescriptions Filled—1967

Eye exams -185

Dental patients- 120
 Major surgeries – 56
 Minor surgeries - 83
 Surgery consults – 269
 Commitments to Christ – 28

It was a very busy but rewarding week for us. And as you can see, one does not need to have medical training to participate. General helpers are a necessity. So let us know if this is something that might interest you. Our next weeklong project will be at the end of January, 2026



New Additions

—Anabaptist Community Bible (MennoMedia)

—First nation’s version: N.T.: an indigenous translation of the New Testament

—Flyover church: how Jesus’ ministry in rural places is good news everywhere by Brad Roth

—Unraptured: how end times theology gets it wrong by Zack Hunt

—Comfort and joy: readings and practices for advent by Sherah-Leigh Gerber

—In God’s good image: how Jesus dignifies, shapes, and confronts our cultural identities by J.W. Buck

—Living that matters: honest conversations for men of faith by Steve Thomas

—The me I was made to be: helping Christian parents navigate identity conversation by Christie Penner Worden

—We follow Jesus: Anabaptist at 500 study by Jacob Lee (Salt & Light)

—I am not your enemy: stories to transform a divided world by Michael McCray

—Compelling convictions: finding our future in a modern world: Brethren in Christ core values revisited by Terry Brensinger

—Braving the future: Christian faith in a world of limitless tech by Douglas Estes

—Collateral damage: changing the conversation about firearms and faith by James Atwood

—Disarmed: the radical life and legacy of Michael “MJ” Sharp by Marshall King

—Birth of the chosen by Terry Wildman (picture book)



Hope’s 40th anniversary

Dear Members of Hope Mennonite Church: We are excited to announce the formation of a special committee to

plan and organize the celebration of our church's 40th anniversary, which will take place in October 2025. This milestone is a testament to the faith, dedication, and community spirit that have defined our congregation over the past four decades.

The Vision Council is seeking volunteers to join this committee. Your involvement will be crucial in ensuring that our 40th anniversary is a memorable and joyous occasion for all. The committee will be responsible for planning various events, coordinating with different church groups, and creating a celebration that honors our past while looking forward to our future.

If you are interested in being a part of this important initiative, please contact the church office or Pastor Sara at pastor@hopemennonite.org We look forward to working together to make this anniversary a truly special event. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to Hope Mennonite Church.

Blessings, Michelle Jantz



Note from Ruth Harder

This image, given to me by a dear friend in Kansas City, hangs by the door of the pastor’s office at Rainbow Mennonite Church. It’s my way of greeting hope as I come and go every day. It’s going to be the last thing I pack before moving to Wichita, and the first thing I plan to put up in the Pastor’s office.

Jesse and I look forward to discovering new dimensions of hope with each and every one of you. Thank you for the call and the confidence you have placed in us. We return that sense of confidence because God’s call is clearly alive with you all. See you soon.



Is the picture really going to come out soon? The answer is yes. Things have been slower than anticipated with getting photos and info for our newer attendees, and just changes in general. It has worked out that it isn’t quite done, because we have been able to include everyone. My hope is that it will be done in the next month. *Kim*



NEEDED: People Power for Justice

Each person's presence is important at the Nehemiah Assembly! It will increase our "people power," to help the marginalized around us. So, **SAVE THE DATE OF MAY 8 TO ATTEND JUSTICE TOGETHER'S NEHEMIAH ASSEMBLY.** This year's assembly focuses on proposals to improve affordable housing and continuing the work on the Multi Agency Center for the Homeless.

During the months of December through April, research teams for Homelessness and Affordable Housing are in the process of gathering information through interviews with local community organizations. They seek to understand the problem, then suggest reasonable and doable solutions. The proposed solutions will be presented at the Solutions Rally on April 10.

At the May 8 Nehemiah Assembly, the solutions will be presented to invited local, county or state decision makers for their responses and discussion. The decision makers are given and briefed beforehand on each proposal. When our decision makers see a room filled with respectful people in support of these justice-based proposals, it lets them know that we will hold them accountable for improving the lives of our marginalized fellow citizens. This is "people power".

So, please check those calendars and mark May 8 to be at the Nehemiah Assembly at 6:00 at the WSU MetroPlex.



CALLING ALL MOWERS!

Each year we have faithful mowers who keep our lawn looking great! If you enjoy mowing and love being outdoors, please consider joining the group. Last year each of the seven mowers were scheduled about 5 times during the season – March through November. If you would like more information or are interested in this ministry, please contact the church office. A 2025 schedule will be made soon.



Givens newsletter

Hello, Dear Friends,

I hope that your Christmas and New Year holidays were beautiful moments filled with love

and surrounded by family and friends. I hope you were able to spare a few moments to reflect on and pray for the people around the world who don't have shelter or

food or security. I'm going to spend this letter doing something I don't normally do: Ask for funds.

You see, we've spent the last two years working among some of the most vulnerable peoples in the world. We've spent our days loving and being loved by them, and we've spent our nights awake, wondering whether we would ever see them again. We've had moments of darkness and moments of tremendous joy. I can't put into words exactly how this experience has changed me, but there is one thing I can say with absolute certainty: I will never be the same person I was when I left the United States.

Our work has become our passion. We've met people from all around the world. We've had the opportunity to laugh and cry in equal measure when people celebrate or suffer. We truly believe that we have discovered the work we have been called to do. We have no intention of leaving when there's so much work remaining.

There are still thousands of people in Calais who have to sleep on the streets, dreaming of a better life across the waves. As long as there are people who need a safe place to sleep and food to eat, we cannot end our work here.

But our work depends on financial contributions from people like you. We began our work here on an extremely positive note with significant support, both spiritual and physical. As we've continued our lives in Calais our support has remained strong, but to continue, we must count on churches and individuals like you.

- As things stand for this term, we are currently at 73% of our monthly goal. It must be said that we are not currently in an emergency situation, but if we don't pick up our support numbers, our ability to stay and continue our mission may be impeded.

And we're not finished here. Not even close. We're preparing to launch an exciting new initiative that will take our impact even further—stay tuned for details soon!

- Click the link below to make a donation today—your support changes lives. Any amount is incredibly appreciated and meaningful. Your financial contributions make our work here possible. With your support we are able to help provide support to both women and volunteers at the Maria Skobtsova House. Monthly donations are the most helpful, as it lets us know what to expect on any given month, but anything you can give is helpful.

I know this wasn't a typical newsletter. However, I

cannot overstate the importance of your financial support. It allows us to pursue the calling we believe God has placed on our lives: To love God with all our hearts, and to love our displaced neighbors as ourselves. <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z27C/campaign/C-11S44>

Joseph & Rachel Givens are our mission partners in Calais, France.

Shoots of Spring

By Joseph Givens

I was a young idealist.
I thought the world could change,
That green shoots of spring would emerge
From the dark frosty ground.
If I could just say the right words,
Then people would hear;
Their minds and hearts would open
To the suffering they now ignore.
The world could be better,
If people came together,
Joined hands,
Sang the sweet notes of unbroken song.
The wrongs would be right.
A round table with no head or place of honor,
Where all humanity could sit,
Equally and joyfully.
But, now, I am no longer young.
The painful approach of middle age
Creeps up silently in my sleep,
A shadow overhanging my bed.
Am I still an idealist?
Do I believe that wrongs will be made right,
That a round table with no head
Will one day join all humanity?
No,
And yes,
A smaller vision takes hold.
No longer do I see the green shoots
Spring from the frosty ground.
Darkness attempts to grasp my hand.
But I see the brightness
In the smile of the child
Who has run so far from home
That no one remembers his name.
But I remember.
His mother grasps his hand,
Cradles his soft hair on her shoulder,
Comforts his crying,
Wipes the tears from his eyes.

“Thank you,” she tells me.

“For being there when I needed you,

“For caring about me and my son,

“For the roof and the kitchen.”

And then I remember.

My idealism has not faded with age.

It just seems that it

Might have become a little

Smaller.

I wipe a tear from my own eye,

But it's no longer a tear of pain.

Rather, it's a tear of happiness.

I dry it before she notices.

I gaze on this humble scene,

And a shoot of spring

Breaks through the dark frosty ground

Of my own soul.



Mennonite Voluntary Service Tucson, Arizona

by Hannah Lehman

“Our MVS unit drove two hours south, to Douglas, Arizona, and Agua Prieta, Mexico — two towns separated by the United States–Mexico border. We spent three days learning, experiencing and reflecting with *Frontera de Cristo* (Christ’s Border), a Presbyterian ministry that seeks to ‘build bridges rather than walls.’

“We walked to the border wall with Jack and Linda, two volunteers with *Frontera de Cristo*, who are also members of Shalom Mennonite Fellowship. The wall is just a few blocks away from their house and came into sight almost immediately.

“My first reaction was how unpleasant the wall looked. This section was built of grated metal and was 20 feet tall, topped with spirals of razor wire. What a disagreeable thing to look at! My second reaction was how vast the wall was. Everywhere I looked was just wall, wall, wall.

“Jack and Linda led us in a time of prayer, remembering and honoring the lives lost while trying to cross the wall. They also talked about the ineffectiveness of the wall. No matter the height, people always find ways to climb it. When the razor wire was added, it only took a few days to figure out how to get around it. Humans are resilient and persistent.

“I worry a lot about water in my daily life. Am I drinking enough? Should I add electrolytes? Did I remember to top up my jug this morning? I can’t imagine my anxiety, if my worries were ‘Can I make it another day

without any water? Can my children survive until we reach the next water source?’

“We drove to a water station a few miles past a backcountry ranch, then hiked a mile through the scraggly desert wilderness, until we reached the border wall. We wore long pants, shirts and socks to protect ourselves from the thorny bushes but still had to move slowly, to avoid excessive cuts and scrapes. The hike was hazardous in the daylight, even with plenty of water, clothing and time. Many people must run through this desert landscape at night. Experiencing this desert walk gave me just a small glimpse into the nightmare running through it at night must be!

“In contrast to the unpleasant U.S. wall, the Mexican side of the wall that we walked along was marked by vibrant murals, heavy traffic, buildings and people. Almost every mural featured living things, like humans, plants and animals.

“During one of our evening reflections, we talked about the necessity for joy in difficult situations. It’s easy to imagine people facing hardships as perpetually sad, somber and desolate. While that can be true, it’s equally true that people facing great hardships often exude abundant joy, life and happiness. If there’s no joy, what else is there to hold on to?

“The difference between crossing into Mexico and crossing into the United States was stark. When we entered Mexico, we did not need to show any form of ID or answer any questions, we were just allowed to cross after a quick visual inspection. When we re-entered the United States, we had to show our passports and describe why we were in Mexico and why we were returning.

“Every Tuesday, *Frontera de Cristo* holds a prayer vigil in Douglas, to remember and honor the lives lost at the border. Each person is signified by a small white cross with their name on it. We started the vigil with a prayer, then lined the streets of Douglas and took turns declaring the names on the crosses. After each name, we responded with ‘*presente*’ (present). It was so powerful to speak and hear the names of people who were once living, who had a family, who had dreams. Although this was a prayer vigil, it also felt like a form of protest. Recognizing the humanity of each life lost challenges the notion that death is just a number.

“‘*No Identificado*’ (unidentified) was written on many of the crosses. Those were the most powerful to me. The people are unidentified to us, but someone is mourning that loss. Someone doesn’t know where their mother is. Someone is still searching for a lost brother. Every single

death has an effect on the world.

“My biggest takeaway from this border delegation is the importance of humanity. Regardless of the political, economic or social situation, we are humans first and deserve to be treated as such. When policies are put above people, it creates a spiral of harm that can only be corrected by bringing humanity back into the situation. How do you do that? You can start by:

- Asking questions.
- Getting to know someone before judging them.
- Making sure people’s basic human needs are met.
- Building relationships.”
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FOLLOW **MennoCon** **JESUS** **and Delegate Assembly**

The Vision Council is seeking 3 people to serve as a delegate to the Delegate Assembly held during the Mennonite Church USA Convention in Greensboro, NC from July 8 - 12, 2025. The official Delegate Assembly is scheduled for July 11th. The delegate body gathers every two years at the Mennonite Church USA Biennial Convention to discuss and vote on resolutions pertaining to the denominational vision, mission, and documents. The delegate body is made up of Executive Board members and representatives from congregations, conferences and constituency groups. The Delegate Assembly is your opportunity to not only speak to the establishment of general policies and the development of programs to carry out those policies, but it is also an opportunity for you to connect with and listen to the various members in our great and diverse denomination.

Early bird registration is due by March 31st. Please contact Michelle at Moderator@hopemennonite.org if you are interested in serving as a delegate for Hope to this convention and delegate assembly.



Keepin' Healthy **Sunscreens**

As awareness grows about the potential risks of conventional sunscreens, the shift towards natural alternatives is gaining momentum. Mineral based products like zinc oxide or titanium oxide are less harmful but there is risk of inhaling the nanoparticles and leaving residue in water, harming the aquatic life. Herbal oils like peppermint or lavender, or coconut and almond oils offer UV protection

and additional skin benefits, but a lower SPF.

By combining the use of natural oils with sensible sun exposure habits, we can safeguard our skin health while minimizing our chemical burden.

Ultimately, the choice between conventional and natural sunscreens is a personal one. However, given the mounting concerns over petrochemical-based products, exploring safer alternatives is a wise investment in both personal and planetary health. As we continue to uncover the hidden costs of our chemical-laden lifestyles, returning to nature's time-tested remedies may prove to be the smartest path forward.



Worship

Ash Wednesday-March 5

Worship-Sara
Pianist-Ruthie
Tech-Scott
Host-Barb

March 9-Lent 1

Worship-Kendal
Scripture-Katie
Pianist-Laurie
Song-Steve
Prep-Connie
Tech-Mike
Host-Barb

March 16-Lent 2

Worship-Sara
Scripture-Jim V.
Pianist-Cynthia
Song-Adam
Prep-Lori M.
Tech-Galen
Host-Lee

March 23-Lent 3

Worship-Connie
Scripture-Donna H.
Pianist-Ruthie
Song-Galen
Prep-Russ G.
Tech-Michelle
Host-Brenda L.

March 30-Lent 4

Worship-Kendal
Scripture-Leslie
Pianist-Vicki
Song-Trae
Prep-Ruthie
Tech-Michelle
Host-Renetta

Front door greeters

March 2-Jason; Andrea
March 9-Connie; Heidi J-L
March 16-Mike & Val
March 23-Chris & Amy
March 30-Jim & Barb

Sanctuary Greeters

March 2-Eldon & Annette
March 9-Ruthie; Natalie H.
March 16-Brenda L. & Cecil
March 23-Scott & Connie
March 30-Chris & Amy

Nursery

March 2-Greg & Leah
March 9-Jordon & Emily
March 16-Kevin & Taylor
March 23-Eldon & Annette
March 30-Donovan & Laurie

Coffee

March 2-Chris B.
March 9-Marcus & Cynthia
March 16-Scott & Connie
March 23-Clinton & Katie
March 30-Cindy

The following article was published in the March 2025 Anabaptist World. It was written by Doug Luginbill, a former pastor here at Hope, and its about Don, who used to attend Hope and has since passed away.

BY DOUG LUGINBILL

THORN OR ANGEL?

Don was a hassle and a godsend

WAS STRUGGLING to know how to be a pastor to Don, the most recent member of our church, who had heard a Mennonite preacher at a homeless shelter. "I think I'm a Mennonite! Can I come to your church?" This was how our journey together began.

Don was blunt in his questions and critiques. A Vietnam veteran, he struggled with finances and spilled coffee on the carpet. Our congregation didn't quite know how to interact with Don.

Was he just trying to get money? (He rarely asked for financial support.) Did he want help finding housing? (He found and kept an apartment on his own.) Were we to help him stop hoarding? (His things made him feel safe and secure.)

Don asked if I might help him navigate the system to find housing and a job. (Or, more likely, I insisted that I go with him to help get his life in order.) Oh, my goodness! We spent the day visiting one organization after another.

I was frustrated when it seemed as if no progress had been made. If a pastor with a master's degree, a car and all the privileges that come with my ethnicity and position couldn't figure out the system, how was someone with fewer resources supposed to figure it out?

Eventually, Don decided what he wanted, what he needed and how he was going to live. He connected with the Veterans Administration and received the benefits he was entitled to. He went to counseling and worked through some hard stuff.



Don's story reminds Doug Luginbill of *The Trinity*, also known as *The Hospitality of Abraham*, by 15th-century Russian artist Andrei Rublev. It depicts three angels who visit Abraham (Genesis 18).

And he kept showing up to our church. He opened our eyes to the piecemeal network of shelters, short-term housing, point-in-time counts of the homeless and competitive requests-for-proposal that decided who would host emergency shelters for the winter.

OFTEN MY CONVERSATIONS with my spiritual director included stories (or complaints) of Don. One day she asked me, "Why do you suppose God sent you this angel?"

"Angel? Are you kidding?" I retorted. But she spoke wisdom I wasn't quite ready to receive.

I learned a lot from Don. He helped me understand the causes of and responses to homelessness. He taught me about post-traumatic stress disorder. He gave me lessons in resilience and helped me dig into my theology of nonviolence. He trained me to be a better listener rather than a problem-solver, a fellow journeyer as well as a

leader, a patient companion.

I can't help but think of Don when we sing "Helpless and Hungry" (*Voices Together*, 268).

Who is the stranger here in our midst, looking for shelter among us?

Who is the outcast? Who do we see amid the poor, the children of God?

As a stranger, this angel puzzled his way into my life and the life of the congregation, softening our edges, opening our eyes and speaking truths we weren't always ready to hear. Thank you, God, for strangers. ●



Doug Luginbill of Bluffton, Ohio, is conference minister for Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA.