

HOPE HEADLINES



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Backpack blessings

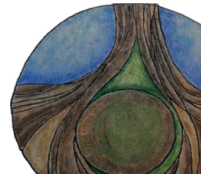
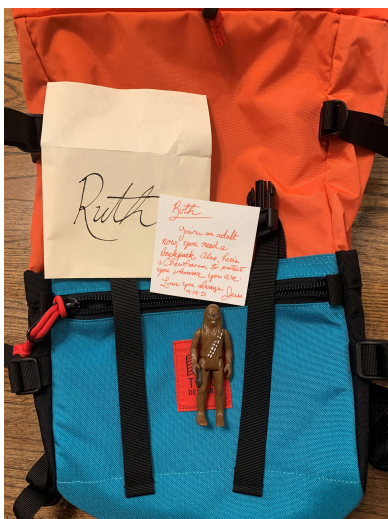
A couple years ago, my husband Jesse thought I was old enough to get a new backpack for my birthday (see picture). I love wearing it, especially knowing Chewbacca is protecting me wherever I go (take another look at the picture and maybe you'll spot him).

You'll see me wearing my backpack this Sunday, August 30. Jesse will be wearing one as well. And it sure would feel silly if we are the only ones sporting our backpacks at church!

I don't recall where and when I first learned of this Backpack Blessing ritual. It's certainly not on most people's liturgical calendar, at least not yet.

I won't give too much away before our blessing ritual scheduled for August 30. It's probably best to experience it rather than me trying to describe it. Suffice to say, it's nice to have tangible reminders that a group of people is praying for you and encouraging you through all the ups and downs of a school year. The loving prayers of the church can't protect us from hard things happening, but the loving prayers of church can help us through the hard times.

We will attach these blessings to tiny carabiners, which then can be attached to backpacks, satchels, briefcases, or key rings. I'm not going to give anything else away before Sunday. I will say, in case you are wondering, not everyone is getting a guardian Chewbacca, much to Jesse's chagrin.



Roots and Stars from Pastor Ruth

I recently started a weekly devotional via zoom with my nieces, nephew, and dad. It's become a wonderful way for my dad, a former pastor who wrote many devotionals, to continue exercising his spiritual gifts. It's also become a great way for his grandchildren to get to know him better and vice versa. Every week, my nieces and nephew take turns choosing a star word for their grandpa to reflect on. It's fun for the five of us to orbit around a common word every week.

Roots was the first star word chosen. My dad was asked to share his associations with this word and how it might instruct Good Living from his perspective, all in 20 minutes or less. We have since moved onto other star words: hope, faith, growth, and change. This week my sophomore niece in college chose the word jealousy. I can't wait to hear what my soon-to-be 80-year-old father has to say to his grandchildren about jealousy!

This weekly ritual has me thinking about the energy that can come with having a common focus. I shared this with the Worship Commission, and we agreed it would be worth experimenting with pairing our annual star word tradition with a season of weekly root words at Hope. So that's what we will do from now until Thanksgiving. Stars and Roots. We need both, right?

Unlike our annual tradition of star words, which are designed for individual focus and reflection, root words will be more collective in nature. In other words, we hope the chosen weekly root word will inspire conversation, storytelling, perhaps journaling or reflections of other kinds. If you are so led, Pastor Ruth welcomes you to share associations you have with the weekly root words. And if not with her, share them with someone else at Hope. Who knows, maybe we can put together an Advent devotional with some of our root word reflections.

Like actual tree roots, may these words and our associations with these roots connect us more deeply, both with one another and with the Tree of Life, so that we can continue practicing good living shaped by Jesus.

The chosen weekly root words will be shared in the Monday emails to the congregation, the weekly bulletin, Facebook, and word of mouth. Our first root word is **Seeds**.



Teacher Spotlight: Kaila Rice

Advanced Placement courses offered by the College Board allow high school students to engage in college-level coursework and potentially earn college credit. Teachers of Advance Placement courses must have a master's degree in their field and meet a strict set of criteria to teach these courses.

Advanced Placement courses are regarded as very challenging and are reserved for upper-level students. Enrollment is typically low – schools (usually 4A and above) offering only one or two classes per subject with perhaps 20 – 25 students enrolled.

The AP classes culminate in a one-time three-hour test over their subject matter. The test is taken in April or May and scores of 1 – 5, are given. A “3” or above is considered passing and will gain college credit at most universities and colleges.

Kaila Rice was asked this past year to take over the AP English program at Andover Central High School. In her first year of teaching AP, she had 82 students enrolled in AP English. (That’s hundreds of papers to grade.) 65 students took the test, and 54 (or 83%) scored a “3” or above. Five students scored a “5”! Congratulations Kaila! Job well done!



Choir season starting soon

Calling all singers to our 2026/27 choir season. We rehearse 3 Wednesdays and sing 1 Sunday a month. If you can’t get to all the rehearsals, don’t let that stop you; just attend as many as you are able. We are delighted to have Trae Gehring back for his 5th year and he makes our time together a lot of fun. If you have any questions, contact Cynthia Loganbill, the choir liaison.

Here is our fall schedule:

September: Rehearse September. 2, 9, and 16

Sing September 20

October: Rehearse September 23, 30, and October 14.

Sing October 18

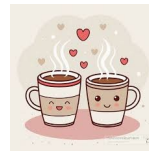
November: Rehearse November. 4, 11, and 18.

Sing November 22

December: Rehearse December 2, 9 and 16.

Sing December 20

The next **Women’s Coffee with Friends** group will be meeting Tuesday, September 15, at 8:30 am at ROOTs Coffee Co. in Yoder. This delightful coffee shop and scratch kitchen is unique, filled with light and plants. They craft their drinks using a combination of



Pink House Alchemy syrups that are free of artificial flavors, chemicals, and dyes. It happens to be owned by Lee Schmucker’s niece, Kendra Horst!

We can plan a carpool from church. Let Annette Chlumsky or the church office know if you are interested. If you have time to extend your morning, there is also a great thrift store downtown, Yoder Discount Grocery, and Yoder Meats that we could explore.



Women’s Bible Study options this fall.

Join us for either or both!

The Tuesday afternoon Women’s Bible Study will begin meeting Sept. 8 at 1 pm. This group meets concurrently on Zoom and in person in the church library. If you are new to the group and plan on attending, please notify the church office. The theme for this fall is “Prophetic Imagination – Stories to Resist Empire.” Each week, each participant will receive an email full of Orienting with the Word (OWW) resources to enhance your Bible Study preparation and practice. No book is needed for this study. Brenda Glanzer Lilliston facilitates this study.

The Thursday evening Women’s Bible Study will begin on Sept 10, at 7 pm on Zoom. If you are new to the group and plan on attending, please notify the church office. A Zoom link will be sent to those attending. The group will study the book Better Ways to Read the Bible: Transforming a Weapon of Harm into a Tool of Healing by Zack W. Lambert. In this compassionate guide, Lambert dismantles four common lenses for reading the Bible that led to harm, then offers four new lenses that promote healing and wholeness. This book welcomes all Christians--regardless of background, doubts, or wounds--to reengage Scripture in life-giving ways. Please purchase your own book. Currently, you can order a book from Baker Book House for \$14 with free shipping or on Amazon. Brenda Glanzer Lilliston facilitates this study.



The Orienting With the Word (OWW) Bible Study is up and running. You might remember from the August newsletter that OWW is a Confessional Bible Study and is an Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) initiative. Brenda Glanzer Lilliston and Pastor Ruth will lead an OWW pilot learning cohort here at Hope. Group members are Magdalena Wenger, Mike Voth, Jim Voth, Wendy Wiens, Pam Carter, Charlie Carter, and Ryan Henneberg. During the first few sessions, the group will share their experiences and understandings of scripture. Brenda and Pastor Ruth will be trained in the Confessional Bible Study method by attending a retreat in Leavenworth, Kansas, on September 17 -19.

New items in the Library

CD: Voices Together 4 vols.

Picture/Children's books

The Donkey that no one could ride by Anthony DeStefano

How to babysit a grandma by Jean Reagan

The Duckling gets a cookie!? by Mo Willems

God's dream by Desmond Tutu

National Parks by Erin McHugh

The Wonder you see by Joanna Gaines

Other books

Better ways to read the Bible by Zach Lambert

On fire by John O'Leary



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made!

These words from Psalm 139 will be front and center during our **church retreat at Camp Mennoscah, October 24-25**. Guest potter, Isaac Shue, will give us interactive and reflective activities involving clay, as we consider ways we are all wonderfully formed and/or mistreated because of our form. We have Anabaptist Disabilities Network to thank for Isaac's involvement this year. Isaac is the owner of Gallery Mostaza in Newton, KS.

We will publish our retreat schedule and registration information soon! **For now, save the dates: October 24-25.**



Bringing faith into action

2026-2027 cycle

Hope Team Leaders:

Grace Parker Sutter

Pam Carter

Doug Voran

Heather Voran

Wendy Wiens, Hope rep to JT Board

Pastor Ruth Harder

Ethan Henry, Justice Together staff



Tending the Garden

More and more research is pointing to the SAD or Standard American Diet as not just contributing to poor health but actually causing disease. Hallmarks of the SAD are overconsumption of ultra-processed, heavily preserved foods, refined grains (stripped of nutrients, sprayed with chemicals and genetically modified), and sugary beverages devoid of any nutrients. Some conditions being linked to our SAD are breast cancer, prostate cancer, colon cancer, insulin resistance, liver disease, inflammation, and neurodegenerative disease. Think of your body as garden soil. If the soil is nurtured with abundant nutrients, fertilized with non-toxic and organic products, watered well with clean water, the soil will give rise to health and well-being. Include in that formula daily movement, restful sleep, and stress management techniques. The path to better health may not lie in a pill or vaccine, but in the daily choices we make about what we put on our plates, and how we care for our garden soil, our bodies.

- ✓ **Aug. 18:** Clergy Cohort meeting-Pastor Ruth
- ✓ **Aug. 23:** Hope Team Leader meeting with Justice Together Staff Ethan Henry
- ✓ **August 27 | August 29:** Listening Process training for Team Leaders
- ***September 20:** Listening Session during 2nd Hour @ Hope -Whole congregation invited



Radical Hospitality – How Can We Be More Like Dolly?

The world lost an icon, a true philanthropist, and a person of faith this week. We will miss you, Dolly Parton. What many are finding out about Dolly is that she was a giver, a person who displayed radical hospitality to all persons with whom she came in contact. She helped so many people with her gifts, her contributions and her generosity. I could go on but this article is not necessarily about Dolly. But her passing made me think, “How could we be more like Dolly?”

In the June newsletter, I introduced the formation of the Radical Hospitality committee and how we were going to explore radical hospitality, define what it means for Hope and find ways to bring it to life. The first step in this journey was to find people who had a passion and interest in hospitality and who wanted to be a part of this journey. The Radical Hospitality team has been formed. Members include Sharon Morford, Barb Voth, Lee Schmucker, Michael Schaffer, Isabelle Jantz, Maddie Anderson and Katie Anderson. All team members bring unique perspectives, different experiences and bring different skills and abilities. What a gift!

First thing on our agenda is to create a working definition of Radical Hospitality that will serve as our foundation for all that we do at Hope. We are taking into consideration current definitions, Bible references, and previous work done by others in the church. Once we have a definition, we will present it to the Vision Council and get input and hopefully approval.

The second thing we are working on is creating a “Wish List” of items, activities, etc. that we would like to include in the Radical Hospitality work. We are looking at all aspects of Radical Hospitality including **Spiritual** learning and living, **Physical** spaces and visual interest, **Accessibility** of facilities inside the building and outside, **Neighborly** spaces where we reach out beyond our comfort zones and **Comfort** for all who attend. An example includes reviewing the handicap parking space location. Right now, individuals who park in the designated spaces must walk up and down an incline to enter our building. This can be difficult especially when it rains or snows. The parking lot is fairly flat except for the area we have designated for special parking. So maybe it's time to move those spaces to make the building more accessible. Another example is the street sign on Maize Road. It has been there for a while, is faded and frankly hard to read from the street. Maybe it's time for a refresh. These are just a few examples of many things on the Wish List.

We are creating a list of ideas and possibilities for consideration. If you have any ideas, please send them to me or share them with others on the committee. We value your input and are open to all suggestions. Blessings, Sharon Morford, chair

Coalition to dismantle the
Doctrine of Discovery



Kansas Repair Community

A year ago, individuals from several area Mennonite churches formed the Kansas Repair Community (KRC), a local affiliate of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery.

KRC has been established to explore specific actions to dismantle the Doctrine. We are currently working with local chapters of the national organization, Missing and Murdered Indigenous People and Women (MMIP/MMIW).

84.3% of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) women have experienced violence in their lifetime, including 56.1% who have experienced sexual violence. In the United States, Indigenous women are 10 times more likely to be murdered or gone missing than non-Indigenous women. 65% of reported missing Indigenous women are targeted due to their Indigenous identity.

KRC wishes to build our coalition by gaining the support of individuals who cannot commit to monthly meetings or committee work but are still interested in issues of justice as they relate to our Indigenous neighbors. Our goal is to increase our numbers to have a strong and significant voice if we were to call for legislation or other initiatives to make changes which favor marginalized Indigenous persons.

Marcus Loganbill is a member of KRC and is available to host a book study or film study at Hope Mennonite on various topics of Indigenous justice building. Some suggested films are: “*Sugarcane*”, “*Bring Her Home*”, and “*We Were Children*”. Books include “*What Does Justice Look Like?*” (Waziyatawin), “*The Serviceberry*” (Robin Wall Kimmerer), “*The Land is Not Empty*” (Sarah Augustine), “*Red Alert*” (Daniel Wildcat) and “*An Indigenous Elder’s Vision for Our Future*” (Steven Charleston).

Interested people would be given a timeframe to view the film or read the book and then come together one evening to discuss over a meal or dessert. This would involve only one evening rather than a typical series of discussions. If you would be interested in joining a group exploring Indigenous issues through a discussion of readings or films, please contact Marcus, and we will collectively choose a book or film and set a date and time for discussion.

September Reminders:



Worship Leadership:

Worship Leaders for September

September 6-Renetta
September 13-Natalie H.
September 20-Natalie H.
September 27-Jim V.

Scripture Readers

September 6-Barb V.
September 13-Chris T.
September 20-Ruthie
September 27-Ben

Pianists

September 6-Cynthia
September 13-Laurie
September 20-Vicki
September 27-Ruthie

Song Leaders

September 6-Magdalena
September 13-Galen
September 20-Trae
September 27-Adam

Worship Prep

September 6-Connie
September 13-Russ
September 20-Ruthie
September 27-Joanna

Tech

September 6-Scott
September 13-Michelle
September 20-Grant
September 27-Mike V.

Sound Tech

September 6-Jesse
September 13-Rod
September 20-Leon
September 27-Galen

Front Door Greeters

September 6-Marcus; David N.
September 13-Eldon & Annette
September 20-Connie; Michelle
September 27- Jim & Barb

Nursery

September 6-Justin & Tiffany
September 13-Eldon & Annette
September 20-Jerold & Donna
September 21-Brenda H; Kara

Coffee

September 6-Marcus & Cynthia
September 13-Scott & Connie
September 20-Chris B.
September 27-Joanna

Mowers

September 6-Jerold
September 13-Randy P.
September 20-Travis
September 27-Grant

Memorial Garden

September 1-5-Karin K.
September 6-12-Joanna
September 13-26-Connie
September 27-Oct 3-Joanna

Zoom Host

September 6-Brenda L.
September 13-Renetta
Sept 20-Warkentines
September 27-Barb V.

Sanctuary Greeters

Sept 6-Jordon/Emily
Sept 13-Steve/Sharon
Sept 20-Jared; David S.
Sept 27-Justin/Tiffany

