

Members and Friends of Hope Community Baptist Church:

We are pleased to share with you some highlights of the many events and activities that took place at our church during 2008 as well as some statistics and financial reports for your consideration. Each of our boards and committees has prepared a brief report of their respective accomplishments and activities as follows:

Pastor Report	Pastor George Johnson
Outreach Report	Mike Muchortow
Youth Group Report	Stephen and Cindy Eichhorst
Deacon Board Report	Marty Cole
Christian Education Report	Michelle Johnson
Music Committee Report	Tom Neumann
Church Clerk Report	Linda Sonnenberg
Treasurer Report	Melanie Muchortow

As we move to a Ministry Council governance structure in 2009, the church leadership felt it was important to increase the level of communication with our members, and the report is one of the steps being taken to accomplish that objective.

We also are implementing a "suggestion and comment box" process to allow members to share their ideas and suggestions with the Ministry Council on ways to improve or enhance our church environment, processes and programs. The suggestion box is located on the wall outside of the church offices. A form to document your ideas and suggestions is available at the Welcome Center. We hope our members take advantage of this new process as well as share any ideas, comments and concerns with the members of the 2009 Ministry Council. The members are as follows:

Pastor George Johnson	Senior Pastor
Fred Schienke	Moderator
Carmen Marion	Church Clerk
Marty Cole	Deacon Chair
Bob Vanscoy	Trustee Chair
Melanie Muchortow	Finance Chair
Dick Copus	Christian Education Chair
Tom Neumann	Music Chair
Karin Peitsch	Women's Ministry Chair

We hope you find this annual report to be of interest and value.

Pastor Report

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now..." Phil. 1:3-5

What a joy to serve the Lord with you in 2008! As I reflect on all that the Lord has done in and through Hope this past year, I am filled with gratitude. The reports in this package will show many exciting details from various ministries here at Hope, so I will only highlight a few, along with my personal involvements.

Preaching-Teaching Ministry

My days (and many nights) are filled with times of study and prayer in preparation for the teaching and preaching ministry God has called me to here at Hope. This past year, it was a real joy to wrap up a series on "The Sermon on the Mount" on Sunday mornings. There were a few shorter series including, "The Christian's Involvement in Politics" in October, "The Prodigal Son" in November and special Thanksgiving and Advent focuses at the end of the year. On Wednesday nights we have been going through a survey of the books of the Bible but took a break for several months to focus on Paul's "One Another" admonitions. It was also a real joy to team teach a Sunday School class with Paul Herlein on "The Cults" this past fall and winter. In addition to these regular teaching times, I have also had the privilege of leading two baptismal and member classes with children and adults in the spring and fall, leading Seniors Unlimited Bible studies and monthly Bible studies at St. George Towers (across the street) as well as other service opportunities in the community!

Leadership Development

After preaching, teaching and prayer, I believe that the raising up and encouragement of leaders here at Hope must be a top priority. We are now in our third year of the Leading Edge program from Vantage Point 3. Our own NAB conference invested a lot of time and money developing and launching this ministry. With 9 men participating in our first year, 9 women participating with Michelle in our second year and now 9 men and women participating in our third year (with both Michelle and me). We are excited to see 27 members of Hope growing in their leadership gift! We currently meet on the 2nd and 4th Sunday evenings of each month from 6-8 PM. God has truly blessed this ministry! It is our prayer that many more will grow in their leadership gifts through this vital ministry in the years ahead! Personally, I have launched into a doctoral program at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary with concentrations in leadership, church management and revitalization. This will be at least a five year process. Thank you for your encouragement and support in my continued education and development as a church leader.

Visitation, counseling and Care Ministries

The visitation ministry to various groups is also a vital ministry! A couple of afternoons each week and a few evenings each month are invested in such care. I am often in the hospitals, nursing homes and homes of the sick and shut-ins as well as those newer to the church family. I am grateful to our deaconesses, deacons as they serve alongside me. Al Sonnenberg is also a big help as he often joins me for Bible studies or visits to sing, pray and bring encouragement. My wife, Michelle, and family also graciously and regularly host various events and meals in our home, which is a real joy. During the year I led several pre-marriage counseling sessions and conducted 4 weddings. I also conducted 9 funerals in 2008 and counseled and prayed with their extended families.

NAB & GLA Ministry

At the local and regional level, there are some additional responsibilities with which I am involved. I am currently serving as the Detroit Metro Area cluster leader for our local NAB churches. This also places me on the GLA (Great Lakes Association) leadership team where I serve as the vice-moderator. Through these connections, I have taken on a leadership role in the coaching ministry, mentoring and coaching two pastors last year and one pastor this year. This is a vital ministry, strengthening the core of the pastor!

Pastor Report – Page 2

Missions Ministry

I also chair the NAB GLA Detroit Area Missions Conference committee and appreciate all of the support from Nancy Herlein, George Herlein and Ruth Gottschling. This past year Hope also hosted the GLA fall meetings and Nancy Herlein worked tirelessly with me coordinating this event. Mike Muchortow was also a terrific support coordinating the Assimilation Seminar with Dr. Charles Arn that preceded the fall meetings.

Thank You All!

I would like to thank our Lord Jesus, my wife Michelle and supportive children, Nick, Nate, Katie and Stephen, for all of their prayers, love and encouragement. Without the Lord and a supportive family, the demands of local church ministry could not be met. In addition, I am truly grateful for Nancy Herlein, Mike Muchortow, Steve and Cindy Eichhorst, Al Sonnenberg, and all of our boards, committees and dedicated church members! You have made our ministry this past year a real joy!

A Look to the Future

I look to the future with confidence, for our Lord is with us (and that's enough). I am excited to be able to continue to teach, preach, pray and share with you! May God be glorified and many souls saved and disciplined through our efforts here together! I trust that our new governance structures will only enhance our communication and visioning process'. I also believe that our new staff will only heighten our impact in this community.

I am confident that the youth ministry will continue to grow both internally and externally under Stephen and Cindy's leadership. As Dan Golladay arrives, I expect our music ministry to continue to blossom with so many faithful and supportive volunteers leading the way. God willing, a second service will be launched and our young adult ministry will be enriched!

I feel a little like the writer of Hebrews in chapter 11 where he mentions a few Godly leaders and then says "but I don't have time to mention..." Since I too am about out of time, let me mention how grateful I am to Mike Muchortow for his work in the area of outreach, Ingrid Klemm for her leadership in the Seniors Unlimited ministry, Lily Muchortow, Eric Gottschling and Michelle Johnson for their choir ministries as well as Herta Gottschling with White Cross and all of our musicians, teachers and helpers at so many levels.

I am grateful to God and all of you! May He continue to use us for His glory and the advancement of His Kingdom in the year ahead!

Grateful to be serving here with you!

Pastor George

Outreach Report

John 15:12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”

Our church family continues to be active in trying to reach our community in Sterling Heights. We are blessed to have lots of guests come through the church doors and to our various events. The most common response I get from guests is how friendly our members are and how comfortable they are made to feel. That is so encouraging to hear!

I want to highlight a few events that were big successes in 2008. On Palm Sunday we had Marquis Laughlin return to Hope and present scripture from the “Passion Week”, reinforcing all that Jesus went through during the week of his crucifixion. Marquis is a powerful presenter and his ability to memorize and present whole books of the Bible is amazing and a gift from God. He truly makes the scriptures come alive!

In September we had our second annual “Fun Fest” on the church grounds which had over 250 attendees with more than 100 guests. There were animals, music, inflatable games, delicious food and a Christian juggler who put on a great show. We plan on continuing the event again in 2009 as it is well received and attracts many people from our surrounding neighborhoods. It is a big undertaking with many of our members working tirelessly behind the scenes to make it a success.

The other area that took off this year is community service projects. Under the leadership of Cheryl Ehrle and Charlotte Schienke we became much more intentional in reaching out to organizations that support the underprivileged in our area. We collected clothes and household items for “Turning Point” which is an organization that provides for the needs of victims of domestic violence. We also became involved in helping “Big Family of Michigan” whose goal as an organization is to make life better for children waiting to be adopted. Several of our members also assisted with building projects sponsored by the Macomb County Habitat for Humanity. As they say, the joy is in the giving, not just in the receiving!

Additionally, we started a partnership during the year with Fellowship Chapel to work together on various outreach programs so that we can leverage our knowledge and resources more effectively. This initiative is just in the early stages and we look forward to working together with our sister church in making a greater impact in Sterling Heights.

Mark Sonnenberg also needs to be commended on the fine job he has done developing and maintaining the Hope website. I have received many positive comments from guests and visitors about the information on the website and the good image that it projects about our church. If you haven't viewed it, I would encourage you to do so at www.hopecommunitybaptist.com.

In closing, I want to say thanks to all of you who work unselfishly to make our church a special place to be a member and to visit. I also am grateful that the church membership approved the purchase of a new electronic church sign for our property. I believe it will have a great impact in communicating all the good things happening at Hope as we try to better reach out to the unchurched in our community.

May God continue to bless you and your families as you serve Him!

Michael Muchortow

Youth Group Report

Many of the youth group activities in 2008 focused on loving and serving others. This year, the teens reached out to the Senior Citizens in our congregation and in our community, to less fortunate children living in Africa, and to a teen in our community and in our own youth group.

Throughout the year, the teens made and sent cards to seniors for the holidays, during times of illness and in general for encouragement. They also purchased and decorated ornaments this Christmas to give to the seniors at the St. George Towers during our annual Christmas Caroling Event. Over thirty-five teens participated and spread a little Christmas cheer to the seniors who live there.

In the spring, the teens participated in a 30 hour Famine to raise money for children in need who live in Africa. During the famine, the teens volunteered their time by performing odd jobs at the home of members and at the church; including painting and cleaning the Youth Room. It made true hunger a reality for us all.

Right after last years Winter Retreat, we received the horrible news of Brandon McNeil's cancer. It was a scary time for all of the teens. However, they did not let their fear or worry take hold. They decided right away to do whatever they could to help Brandon get through it. The teens sent cards and funny photographs of the crazy things they were doing. They called, sent fake money (a million dollars), and e-mailed Brandon to keep him in the loop and remind him of our love. At every opportunity, they also volunteered to pray for him. We are anxiously awaiting the end of his last treatment and an end to his ordeal. He has inspired us all to make the best of every situation. But best of all Brandon has been faithful to the group and has been at each event that he was physically able to attend.

In addition to sharing God's love with Brandon, the teens adopted a teen in need this Christmas from our local community. The girls got to work on a patch work quilt for the teen's bed. They also went shopping with money they collected from the youth group to buy Christmas presents to make her Christmas a little more joyful.

The group also gave of their time and talents at the Fun Fest in September. Many helped set up and run the various carnival type games. Others manned the popcorn machine, painted faces and served food. That outreach event was a huge success in large part due to the Youth Group's participation.

Many of the Senior High kids gave their time to spend a week running a Vacation Bible School in Tennessee at a Women and Children's Shelter. Several changed their work schedules and gave up other summer activities to participate in this mission project. The children loved the teens and the teens loved them back all week long. Following that trip many of the same teens served or participated at the Hope VBS, which was a great week of fun and learning.

All in all it was an event filled year. With the transition of leadership from Ben and Amber Wilson to Stephen and Cindy Eichhorst, the teens had a lot of change to process. Most people are uneasy when it comes to change. However, the young people really rallied behind the new leadership and kept their focus on serving others. This made for a joy filled year.

Finally, just to ease your minds, the teens did enjoy many fun events such as Girls Only sleepovers, a Guys overnighter, Capture the Flag at the Neumann's, a trip to Michigan's Adventure Park, and Back Yard Bible Studies all summer long hosted by many of our Hope members. So it was not just work, but plenty of fun and good times as well.

Thanks for all your prayers and support of the Youth Ministry at Hope.

Stephen and Cindy Eichhorst

Deacon Board Report

As was the case with many of the committees within our church, the Deacon Board stayed busy throughout 2008 with planned and unexpected projects. We do not always know what opportunities and tasks God has set aside for us, but we seek to follow his leading and to be his servants. Summarized below are the major initiatives that the Deacons focused on during 2008.

New Church Governance Structure

We began the year with the Ministry Council concept still under a trial period, but in the spring the Advisory Board approved the change in church governance and recommended that it be brought before the church for a vote. The Deacons devoted a significant amount of time discussing how our role and responsibilities would change within the new structure. The primary change is that the Deacons will now be less involved in church administration and more focused on member care and the spiritual health of our church.

Review and Update of Church Constitution

The change in church governance required a change to portions of the church constitution. We decided it was appropriate to review the entire constitution for any updates or corrections since it was several years since such a review had been undertaken. This review was a focus of the Deacons time during the second half of the year and culminated with the church membership approving the proposed changes to the Hope Constitution at the Annual Business meeting.

Youth Ministry Leadership

An unanticipated task for 2008 was the filling of the vacancy in the leadership of our Youth Ministry with the departure of Pastor Ben and Amber Wilson. Our youth have been blessed with many years of service from Stephen and Cindy Eichhorst as Youth Sponsors. Fortunately, they were able to provide stability for our youth ministry once the Wilson's returned back home to Maine in June. After much consideration and prayer, the Deacon Board recommended that Stephen and Cindy be approved as the permanent, part-time Youth Leaders and become part of the paid staff at Hope. Their commitment to our youth continues to be a blessing to our church body. We ask that all members hold up Stephen and Cindy in prayer as they strive to balance their roles as parents, full-time secular employees, and part-time youth leaders at Hope.

Recruiting and Hiring an Associate Pastor

We began the year continuing our search for a Part-time Music Minister. That search had been in effect since August of 2007, but we received no interest from viable candidates. In the summer of 2008, we decided to cancel that effort and dissolve the search committee. We then developed a new job description for a full-time Associate Pastor with a focus on the Music, Young Adult, and Outreach Ministries here at Hope. We established a new search committee for this full-time position which eventually led to the call of Dan and Juleen Golladay. We thank God for meeting our needs and placing Dan and Juleen in our midst and anxiously look forward to their start date in the first quarter of 2009. We will strive to work closely with them so that their transition to Hope is smooth and effective.

Looking Forward in 2009

As we move into 2009, the Deacons will be focused on further defining our role and responsibilities, as we strive to be more effective in the areas of member care and the spiritual health of our church. As part of this endeavor, we are planning to have some combined meetings with the Deaconesses so that we can enhance how each group supports the efforts of the other as well as our church membership. We also recognize that there will be some unanticipated issues and initiatives that will require the attention and action of the Deacon Board this coming year. We ask that you continue to lift us up in your prayers as we seek to effectively carry out the duties that have been entrusted to us.

Marty Cole
Deacon Chairman

C.E. Report

The C.E. Committee was hard at work in the calendar year 2008. The members of the committee are as follows:

Michelle Johnson – Chairman, Clubs representative
Dick Copus & Monica Neumann – Sunday School representatives
Carmen Marion – Nursery representative
Louise Wilson – Church Time Program representative
Cindy Eichhorst – Youth representative
Christel Sonnenberg – Library representative
Lisa Gottschling & George Lutz – Members-at-Large

The C.E. Committee oversees all Christian Education programming at Hope pertaining to both adults and children. Our main goal for the year 2008 was to see an increase in Sunday School attendance across the board. We are happy to report that attendance is up from 80 people in average attendance to 120 people in average attendance—a 50% increase. We credit this to a successful Rally Day which positively promoted the good Sunday School programming available at Hope. We are also receiving very positive feedback from the adults on the available electives. The women's class in particular is growing and will continue to be a good option in our programming.

Although our VBS program did not yield a significant increase in numbers for grades K-6, the Jr. High program realized a large increase. Not only were there more Jr. Highers in attendance, but our youth workers are pursuing and developing more ongoing relationships with the summer attendees.

Our clubs and church time programs are maintaining their attendance levels. Things are going well in these areas with some special events occurring in the club program in particular. The Tree Climbers enjoyed two special events: A kite-building workshop in April and a tour of Pizza Hut complete with dinner in July. A magician is scheduled to perform in early 2009 for all club and youth group participants. The Big Sister/Little Sister program is receiving a lot of positive feedback, as is the entire club program.

Library Sunday yielded much interest and additional funding for our library. Christel Sonnenberg considers it a huge success, and the funds have provided more resources including a much needed computer to update files and maintain catalogues of available materials. The computer program will allow ease of access to the librarians in assisting users. The library is actively used by members and visitors alike and is considered a great resource. A big thanks to Christel for her continued leadership in this area!

The Promise Choir was very successful again this past year! The moving of the program to the Morning Service just prior to Christmas has been a positive change, which we hopefully will continue in the future. The program was enjoyable to all, and we increased our participation successfully by adding willing singers from the Jr. High/Sr. High groups.

As always, the Hope Nursery is the best! The coordinators are not having any trouble staffing the services, and parents are reporting a high comfort level in leaving their children in our nursery. Several visitors have commented that they consider our nursery safe, clean and nurturing, which is delightful to hear.

In general, the C.E. committee is pleased with the variety and quality of the programming we oversee. We are always open to suggestions and ideas as we continue to provide spiritually sound options for Christian Education.

Michelle Johnson
C.E. Chair

Music Committee Report

Psalm 96:1 "Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth."

The Psalmist was correct in pointing out that music will always be a prominent part of worship to our Lord and God and that its forms are varied and ever changing.

2008 was an eventful year for the music ministry at Hope. Our first order of business was to prepare for the possible change to our church governance structure. We were charged with reviewing our roles and responsibilities and updating them for the new proposed Ministry Council model. The results of this process were a more focused purpose statement, a streamlined committee membership where all areas of the music ministry are represented, and an expanded description of the music committee's roles and responsibilities which now include oversight of both music and audio visual elements related to worship.

During 2008 we were able to purchase new hymnal/chorus books for the chapel, and initiate the construction of an improved platform for the grand piano in the Sanctuary that provides our accompanists with more room and a safer surface to work from. We closed the year, with a first since moving to our Sterling Heights location, when the male and sanctuary choirs combined forces and were accompanied by a youth orchestra to present a powerful and moving special Christmas Eve concert.

We are looking forward to serving the membership in 2009, and Lord willing, hope to be able to purchase some additional equipment that should enhance the music ministry at Hope. Likewise, we eagerly anticipate the arrival of our new associate minister, Pastor Dan Golladay. We know that God has blessed Dan with a passion and talent in music, and we look forward to working together with him to serve the people of Hope and to glorify God.

I'd like to also thank Herta Gottschling and Carmen Marion for their many years of faithful service to the Music Committee in their roles as members at large. Herta served for the last four years, and Carmen served for 7 years with the added responsibility of being our Music Committee secretary during those years. The good news is that both will continue to serve in other capacities in 2009. Carmen will be the Church Clerk where I am sure she will continue to represent the interests of the music ministry as a member of the Ministry Council. Herta will also continue to be active leading the White Cross group as well as volunteering in other areas of Women's ministry.

Finally I would like to thank all those members who contribute to the music ministry at Hope through their voluntary service. I am convinced that God has blessed our congregation with an abundance of individuals who are musically talented and are willing to use such gifts for His service. Praise God from whom all blessing flow!

Thomas Neumann
Music Committee Chair

Church Clerk Report

God has continued to bless our church with a stable membership roster.

During 2008 we welcomed 23 new members – 12 by baptism and 11 by transfer and Christian testimony.

We also experienced a loss of 20 Church members – 16 by their request for transfer and 4 because of death.

We concluded the 2008 year with a total active membership of 287.

It has been a privilege to serve Hope Community Baptist Church as Church Clerk for the last 6 years.

Linda Sonnenberg
Church Clerk