

LETTER OF HOPE

LIVING OUT GOD'S GRACE WE SEEK TO BE NEIGHBORS TO ALL

HOUSE OF HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

NEW HOPE MN

Let us worship together in the sanctuary at 10am!

Pastor's Letter:

DECEMBER 2023

Dear House of Hope,

In December, as the world around us turns to the holiday hubbub, to lights and shopping, decorating, and baking, the church turns to a short season of the year called Advent. Advent is a time of preparation and excitement, yes, but also acknowledges the hardship of the world as we wait and hopes for a new kingdom to be born among us. Advent holds space for anger and mourning, for noticing the ways that the world is not as it should be. And, Advent points us to quiet, to prayer, to pause. In the midst of the darkening days and growing winter, Advent offers us the reminder of glowing candles and deep breaths. I find, amidst the busyness of Christmas preparation, that the space of Advent is just what I need.

A beloved Advent hymn is Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (ELW 254), which begins like this:

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

The holidays can bring out the longing of our hearts- for a world of peace and justice, for a time with friends or family in the past, for a break from the chaos, for the true joy we hope for at Christmas. Advent is a time where we as Christians notice our longing, our fears, our worries. Advent is a time where we see the world as it is and know that God promises to be present among us even as we wait and hope for a new kingdom.

So, take the invitation of Advent this year. Light a candle. Take a deep breath. Notice your feelings, notice your neighbor, notice God beside you. Find your rest in the Spirit, hang your hope on Jesus soon to be born into our world, and know that God is with you in expectation and in joy. Always.

And, as we hold the anticipation and patience of Advent, we remember the words of the angels to the lowly shepherds on that cold Bethlehem Christmas Eve so long ago:

*"Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:
to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."*

(Luke 2:10-11)

May Jesus be born in our hearts and our world again today.

Blessings on your Advent and wishes of a Very Merry Christmas,

Pastor Gretchen



LIVING OUT GOD'S GRACE

WE SEEK TO BE NEIGHBORS TO ALL



Read Along with the Lectionary

Dec 10- Third Sunday of Advent
Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28, Psalm 126

Dec 17- Fourth Sunday of Advent
Gospel Luke 1:26-38, Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Dec 24- Nativity of our Lord - Christmas Eve
Gospel Luke 2:1-14 [15-20], Psalm 96

Dec 25- Nativity of our Lord - Christmas Day
Gospel Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20, Psalm 97

ELCA Youth Gathering Fundraiser for 2024

House of Hope youth will be selling 10" x 8.5" Holiday Treat Trays as a fundraiser for their 2024 youth trip to the ELCA youth gathering next summer. The trays will have a variety of holiday cookies and snacks, with a nut-free option available. These are perfect for your own enjoyment, or to give as a gift!

Orders are due by December 10, and trays will be ready for pick-up at House of Hope December 17. Order forms are available in the narthex or in the office.

Checks can be made out to House of Hope, with "Youth Gathering" in the memo line.

Summary of the Ministry Team and Leadership team meetings of November 14:

- Pastor Gretchen informed us that Bishop Ann Svennungsen has served two terms as the Minneapolis Area Synod Bishop. In May 2024 we will be electing a new bishop.
- Pastor Gretchen attended the Faith and Neighboring Practices event. The team members include Gretchen, Ben Allen, Erin Paulsen, and Paul Hansen. They're learning how to get out into the neighborhood and are planning a summer project.
- Pastor Gretchen is working with Pastor Colin at First Lutheran to hire a new parish nurse. They're working on the job description. If you know anyone who's interested, let her know. Debbie Haney would like to retire by the end of the year.
- We discussed our 2023 financial situation. We will remind members to complete their 2023 pledge if possible, and to consider a donation towards the faith budget that we approved in January 2023.
- We have volunteer opportunities at the school next to us, Escuelos Exitos. Contact Erin Paulsen if you're interested.
- All of the Ministry Team members continue to do the work they have been asked to do, and they do it enthusiastically!
- House of Hope will be celebrating our 60th Anniversary in October 2024. Look for updates in 2024!

LIVING OUT GOD'S GRACE... IN WORSHIP

Music Director's Notes

The Prophet Jeremiah says: The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. And the Prophet Isaiah says: A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." No where does it say that it's time to start buying stuff and having parties. We are told "The days are surely coming" and "prepare the way of the Lord." It's time to get ready, prepare for when the Lord does come. All around us society is determined that we should plunge into Christmas without preparation for the coming of our Lord. We need to take time to retreat from all the Christmas noise around us so that we can prepare our hearts, minds and souls for this New Lord that will soon be arriving. At House of Hope we offer you opportunities for preparation every Sunday morning and Wednesday evening when you can join with others as we all prepare. Join us! Our preparation for the coming of the Lord is enhanced by the music provided by our musical groups. On Sunday, December 3, the Hope Chorale will sing Prepare the Way of the Lord by William Rowan. Sunday, December 10, our Sunday School children will lead us in a Christmas program where we all participate. Sunday, December 17, we will observe our Service of Lessons and Carols. This service features the musical groups of our church and focuses on telling the story of Jesus from the prophecies of the Old Testament foretelling what is coming through the angels and shepherds to the Incarnation of the Word made flesh. We will read lessons and sing carols to tell the story. Joining us to tell story will be a string ensemble. You will hear the hymn Once in Royal David's City; the hymn Now the Heavens Start to Whisper; The Lord at First Did Adam Make by Robert Lehman; Ding, Dong Merrily on High by Daniel Schwandt; 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime by Cathy Moglebust; A Spotless Rose by Ethan McGrath; the hymn The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came; Silent Night by Dan Forrest. The First Noel by Linda R. Lamb The Magi Who to Bethlehem Did Go by Nancy Raabe; the hymn O Come All Ye Faithful; and Benediction by Susan Borwick. Christmas Eve, December 24, the Hope Chorale will sing As It Fell Upon a Night by Ruth Artman; and the Hope Bells will ring Midnight Stars Make Bright the Skies by Anne Krentz Organ.

George

NEAR & PRISM HOLIDAY TOY SHOPPE

Consider donating to the NEAR and Prism Holiday Toy Drive this year.
Wish lists are available on the table in the Narthex.



THANK YOU!!!

Thank you to everyone who donated coats.
The New Hope Police Department picked up the donated coats November 30.
They were impressed with the amount collected!

Stories of Hope

Below are a few *Stories of Hope*. There is still time to add to our collection of *Stories of Hope*! Forms are available in the Narthex and in the office.

When Ben and I first entered House of Hope, we were amazed at the wonderful welcome we received. Everyone was so friendly; we felt "at home". Later during Ben's funeral, surrounded by family and friends, I felt God's presence. I knew Ben was at peace, and everything would be ok.

I love working with the quilters. It gives me a joyful feeling to know that something I helped make may be a comfort to another person and give them a feeling of **hope**.

~ Sherry

I have always felt cared for by members of House of Hope. Joe and I joined in 2004 when we were newly married. Our kids were in elementary school. I jumped in with both feet by becoming a Sunday school teacher, and later a Confirmation leader. Joe got involved when he found a spot where he was needed: Small Jobs Maintenance Crew. We have always felt valued for our efforts and our ideas.

The love and care shown by House of Hope members was never more clear to us than when Jonathan was sick with anorexia from 2017 to 2020. During that time, many people asked us how he was doing and how we were doing. Many people prayed for us. Three years is a long time to keep up that kind of sustained effort. But you did it! And you continue to ask how our family is doing and how we're doing. The love and care that House of Hope members show for each other is truly outstanding!

~ Karen

Every other Tuesday I volunteer at our Respite group. As caretakers (usually spouses) meet together with our parish nurse to find answers, we volunteers interact with our clients. As we sing with Ben, I see smiles and hear eager voices. Our people love physical activity, such as playing ring toss, doing stretching exercises, and bouncing our big blue ball to each other. We visit a lot as we have lunch together, do coffee time, and work at craft projects. Hearing our clients stories helps us to know them and enables us to encourage them. I do feel **hopeful** for each one, and know that we have given each some smiles.

"Our church name says it all... House of **Hope**."

Feelings of peace, contentment, and hope fill me after our Sunday morning services at House of Hope. We have thanked God for His generous blessings, prayed for the good of the earth, and asked Him to care for the sick, the grieving, the downtrodden, and each one of us. I see friendly smiles and hear beautiful music as I leave, ready to face life again.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said:

"Remember **HOPE** is a good thing, maybe the best things, and no good thing ever dies."

"We need never be hopeless because we can never be broken."

"We must accept finite disappointment but never lose infinite **HOPE**."

It is with this promise of **HOPE** that I look to be led and inspired by the word at HoH.

Stewardship Corner



First, thank you to all who filled out and returned pledge cards for 2024! As of November 30, 2023, we have pledged a total of \$252,800 for the 2024 budget. We have also received pledges of \$239,835 for the **Stories of Hope** Capital Campaign.

Clearly, the Holy Spirit is at work at House of Hope when we receive pledges totaling \$492,635 since November 30, 2023!! We are all so grateful for everyone's generosity. As we celebrate House of Hope's successes, please note that the budget for 2023 is \$383,083 and our pledges for the 2024 annual budget are substantially lower than that amount.

There are approximately 125 giving units (couples or single persons) at House of Hope. A total of 56 giving units have completed pledge cards so far this year. For those 69 giving units that have not completed a pledge card for 2024, it is not too late! Pledge cards are available in the church office.

The Stewardship Ministry Team and the **Stories of Hope** Campaign Committee want to express their gratitude to everyone for participating in this year's stewardship program and capital campaign. There are also a few specific shout-outs that need to be made. Thank you, George Zirbes and Peggy Anderson for the fabulous brunch. It was a wonderful time of fellowship with delicious food. Thank you too to playwright and actor Mark Jensen and actors Randy Wangen and Sam Wangen for the skit "The Playoff Game." Your performance was great, and you taught us an important lesson about hope. To those who helped prepare mailings, decorate Fellowship Hall, serve beverages, and/or clean up, thank you as well.

STEWARDSHIP OF HOPE

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Isaiah 40:3

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness; 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'". Mark 1:2-3

Our readings for the season of Advent give us more **Stories of Hope**.

The First Reading for the second Sunday in Advent this year is Isaiah 40:1-11. The first 39 chapters of Isaiah predict God's judgment on Israel for their trust in foreign powers, worship of idols, and neglect of the needs of the poor. That judgment came when Nebuchadnezzar conquered and destroyed Jerusalem and took many of the people of Judah into captivity in Babylon. The emphasis of the rest of Isaiah, however, is **hope**. God gave the people of Judah **hope** by promising them that he was coming to release them, which happened when Cyrus the Persian captured Babylon.

That same Sunday's Gospel Reading is Mark 1:1-8. In this reading, the "voice in the wilderness" points to the work of John the Baptist, preparing the way for Jesus just as the people of Isaiah's day were to prepare for the coming of God. John the Baptist gave his followers and us **hope** when he said that Jesus will baptize his followers and us with the Holy Spirit. In Martin Luther's Small Catechism, Luther says that Baptism "is a grace-filled water of life and a 'bath of the new birth in the Holy Spirit' as St. Paul says to Titus in chapter 3, 'through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the **hope** of eternal life.'" Titus 3:5b-7

WE SEEK TO BE NEIGHBORS TO ALL... IN OUR HOUSE OF HOPE COMMUNITY

BIRTHDAYS

Maddie Halupnick	Dec 1
Matt Wittmer	Dec 1
Mike Wittmer	Dec 1
Pat Osterkamp	Dec 6
Jane Griffith	Dec 7
Marty Gorsky	Dec 9
Tom Haney	Dec 9
Mandy Scott	Dec 10
Ken Gorsky	Dec 11
Harris Haney	Dec 11
Arlen Johnson	Dec 11
Christine Beck	Dec 13
Ian Wold	Dec 13
Carol Darg	Dec 20
John Henderson	Dec 20
Brooks Smith	Dec 20
Steve Nightengale	Dec 21
Pat Carlson	Dec 23
Theresa Henderson	Dec 23
Colleen Nightengale	Dec 24
Lynette Neus	Dec 28
Helen Lemire	Dec 31
Ben Sundeen	Dec 31



THANK YOU FOR YOUR OFFERING!

Thank you for keeping House of Hope in your prayers and for remembering your church with your financial support.

Your kindness and steadfast love has not gone unnoticed!

Checks can be sent to:
House of Hope Lutheran Church
4800 Boone Ave N
New Hope MN 55428



Or give online:
<https://gp.vancopayments.com/gpo/#/donateNow/320a5513-a965-406a-b599-7324da2>

Finance Team October Update

As we kick off our stewardship campaign "Stories of Hope" for 2024, we look towards our ministry in the year to come - dreaming of new ways to reach out and be present to our neighborhood, and continue to worship together. **We continue to work to meet our budget for 2023, giving thanks for all that we have accomplished thus far. Are you able to meet your commitment for this year? Or give a little extra?** We are so grateful for your support of our shared mission here at House of Hope! Our ministry continues in this time because of you and your support!

	October 2023			Year to Date 2023		
	Budget	Actual	Difference	Budget	Actual	Difference
Receipts	\$ 31,923	\$ 28,704	\$ 3,219	\$319,235	\$294,072	\$ 25,163
Disburs.	\$ 32,506	\$ 37,212	(\$ 4,706)	\$325,069	\$344,363	(\$ 19,293)
R less D	(\$ 583)	(\$ 8,508)	\$ 7,925	(\$ 5,833)	(\$ 50,291)	\$ 44,457

Thank you for your continued faithfulness and generosity!

Sunday Worship:

December 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

Christmas Eve Worship at 10:00 a.m. & 4:00 p.m.

There will not be worship services on Christmas Day.

Worship with us December 6, 13, and 20 for midweek Advent worship services at noon. Join us in person or online.

WE SEEK TO BE NEIGHBORS TO ALL... IN OUR HOUSE OF HOPE COMMUNITY

ANNUAL REPORT INFORMATION DUE 12/22

Please turn in 2023 Annual Report information to Jeannie in the church office before December 22. It is preferred to have the information emailed to office@hohlc.org

EVERY MEAL NEEDS

Every Meal (the organization the Wildfire Kidpack works with to distribute weekend meals) is currently NOT able to accept non-perishable food items.

They do need your financial support!!

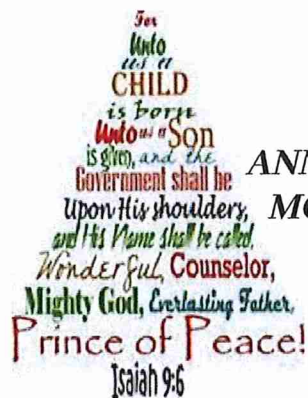


You can make checks to House of Hope with Every Meal in memo.

House of Hope currently has 2 groups serving Lakeview and Forrest Elementary schools. If you are interested or have questions please contact: Ben Allen 863-242-3312, Gary Bearl 763 - 537-1037, or Kris Allen 763-202-5139
Thanks!!!

Prayers of Christian Sympathy

to the family of Mike Quam, whose funeral was held at House of Hope in November.



DO YOU HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT FOR NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER?

Email Jeannie Johnson at office@hohlc.org or leave your announcement in her office mailbox before December 20.

Faith Budget Reminder

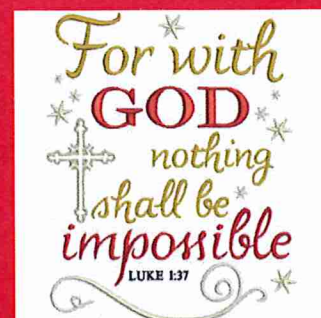
At the beginning of 2023 we, as a Congregation, voted on and approved a 2023 Budget that had a shortfall of \$20,653.00. We called this a Faith Budget. As of the end of October 2023 \$16,560.84 remains. Please prayerfully consider giving a Faith Budget gift in the next month so that House of Hope can go into the next year stronger than ever.

Thank you,

Gary Bearl
Finance Team



**Join us in person for
Christmas Eve
worship services at
10:00 a.m. or 4:00 p.m.
Saturday, December 24,
or join us on facebook
@HouseofhopeMN**



DECEMBER GUILD INFORMATION

Altar

12/10 - Linda Moen
12/17 - Kris Allen
12/24, 10am - Lynne McGrath
12/24, 4pm - Lynne McGrath
12/31- Chris Bearl

Greeter

12/10 - Muriel Armstrong
12/17 - Sharon & Arlen Johnson
12/24, 10am - Lynette & Jim Neus
12/24, 4pm - Nancy Elliott
12/31- Gary Wittmer

PowerPoint

12/10 - Karen Brehmer
12/17 - Rose Wangen
12/24, 10am - Sophie Wangen
12/24, 4pm - Gary Bearl
12/31- Abby Hansen

Usher

12/10 - Nancy Elliott
12/17 - Jim Neus
12/24, 10am - Tom Broeckel
12/24, 4pm - Gary Bearl
12/31- Randy Vescelius

Worship Assistant

12/10 - Kaela Halupnick
12/17 - Chris Brewster
12/24, 10am - Erin Paulsen
12/24, 4pm - Chris Bearl
12/31- Kaela Halupnick

Coffee Servers

12/10 - Mary & Gil Sundeen, and Mandy Scott
12/17 - Kris & Ben Allen, and Mandy Scott
12/24 - No Coffee Served
12/31 - Theresa Henderson, Marilyn Eggert,
and Mandy Scott

LiveStream

12/10 - Sam Wangen
12/17 - Mark Jensen
12/24 - Rose Wangen
12/31- Joe Brehmer

Reader

12/10 - None, Christmas Program
12/17 - None, Lessons & Carols
12/24, 10am - Marlene Holmquist
12/24, 4pm - Jane Griffith
12/31- Chris Brewster



Remember, if your assigned date does not work for you, contact another guild member to trade dates and let Jeannie know at office@hohlc.org or 763-533-3341.



DECEMBER 2023 HAPPENINGS AT HOUSE OF HOPE

(Note: This calendar is subject to change.)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
**Communion is served every Sunday.					1	2 F. H. Reserved
3 10am Worship** 11am Coffee Hour 11am Sunday School 11am Conf. Mentor Mtg	4 5pm Hope Bells 7pm Boy Scouts	5 10am Caregiver Support 10am Respite Care 7pm Faith in MN (in the Lighthouse Café)	6 Noon Advent Worship 7pm Hope Chorale	7 9am SJMC 11am Bible Study 7pm Racial Justice Group	8 Meals on Wheels	9
10 10am Worship** w/ Sunday School Program 11am Coffee Hour	11 9:30am Library Day 5pm Hope Bells 7pm Boy Scouts	12 9am Quilting	13 Noon Advent Worship 7pm Hope Chorale	14 9am SJMC 11am Bible Study	15	16
17 10am Worship** 11am Coffee Hour w/ Intergenerational Sunday School	18 5pm Hope Bells 7pm Boy Scouts	19 9am-noon; Exitos School Christmas Program Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 10am Caregiver Support 10am Respite Care	20 Noon Advent Worship 7pm Hope Chorale	21 9am-noon; Exitos School Christmas Program (Sanctuary & F.H.) 9am SJMC 11am Bible Study	22	23
24 Christmas Worship** 10am & 4pm NO Sunday School, Confirmation Class, or Coffee Hour	25 Christmas Day ONLINE WORSHIP Church Office Closed	26 – Meals on Wheels	27	28 9am SJMC	29	30
31 10am Worship No Communion Today 11am Coffee Hour NO Sunday School or Confirmation Class	Jan 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR! Church Office Closed	Jan 2 10am Caregiver Support 10am Respite Care 7pm Faith in MN	Jan 3 7pm Hope Chorale	Jan 4 9am SJMC 11am Bible Study 7pm Racial Justice Group	Jan 5	Jan 6



House of Hope Lutheran Church
4800 Boone Avenue North
New Hope, MN 55428



HOUSE OF HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Reconciling in Christ Congregation
4800 Boone Avenue North New Hope, MN 55428
Phone: (763) 533-3341
www.hohlc.org
www.facebook.com/houseofhopemn



House of Hope Lutheran Church is a Reconciling in Christ Community. All are welcome to worship, to hear the Good News, to receive the sacraments, and to participate fully in fellowship, service, and leadership. God loves us unconditionally and we endeavor to be a place where that same hospitality is extended to everyone. Following Christ, we seek racial and social equity with reconciliation among all peoples. We welcome everyone, without exception and regardless of sex, race, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical and mental ability, age or station in life, faith, or creed. Each person is a unique creation of God and through Grace, is a child of God. We invite you to come and worship with us!