



## Pastor's Page

Dearest Hope:

March is a month of "march." Kicking off with Ash Wednesday commences the cadence of this Lenten season. For 40 days we will witness this "see-Son" of our Savior. Beholding the ministry march of our Lord, who treads down the path of scorn and shame to pay for our forgiveness with His sacrifice, and redeem us by His blood. Step by step Jesus will make His journey all the way to Jerusalem, all the way up that mountain called Calvary. And there we will see the Son who shows God's great and unconditional love for us on the Cross that Good Friday, "in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). But His March doesn't end there. Jesus still marches. Marching through death and hell and with heel of His boot crushes satan. For on that 3rd day He treads the path of Resurrection & Life. That blessed Easter morn Jesus marched out a path of victory and liberty for all.

To the world this is a march of madness. But it is not madness. It's the Truth that sets us free. Free from sin, death and the devil. Free from darkness, emptiness, loneliness, and insecurity. This is a march of freedom, "the power of God for salvation" (Romans 1:16) to give us forgiveness from all our sins, new & everlasting life as sons and daughter of the God our Father, who is in heaven. Christ has set us free to be His people, to do good works that give a glimpse of his grace and flavor of his forgiveness. Therefore, with St. Paul and all the saint before us, "we are not ashamed of the Gospel" (Rom 1:16). As with Luther we boldly live by

grace through faith in Christ Alone! This is the cadence to which we are called to march in Christ.

So, let's boldly live in this 500th anniversary year of Reformation by marching. Marching out in our streets, our neighborhood, our schools, and work places to show and share the love Jesus, who treads out the path of forgiveness, life and salvation for you and me and all people.

Truly, this is a season to see the Son. The Lord of Love. Prince of Peace. God of Grace. Merciful Master. Selfless Savior. Holy Healer. Risen Resurrector. Devine Designer and Creator who "makes all things new" (Rev. 21:5).

So this March let's march and connect people to Jesus. Carrying our cross in the cadence of by grace through faith in Christ alone that that others may see the Son and believe and receive the victory He won over sin, death and devil. That all people may become part of the family of God as sons and daughters...heirs of eternal life.

In Christ Alone,  
*Pastor Shea Pennington*

*Connecting People to Jesus in 2017*



# march



# Financial Report at a Glance

## JANUARY 2017

### WORSHIP & SERVICE

#### ATTENDANCE

Total Monthly: 1,136

Average per Week: 227

(2016: 244)

### GENERAL FUND GIVING

Net Monthly Income:

\$38,917

Monthly Budgeted:

\*\$33,616

Year-to-Date Income:

\$38,917

Budgeted through Month:

\*\$33,616

Monthly Income  
Less Expenses:

\$5,689

Year-to-Date:

\$5,689

\*Denotes amount in our Blueprint  
for Ministry and Mission 2017

## Growing in the Grace of Giving

Lent is a season of repentant joy. There is joy in repentance because in repentance, God, through His Word, turns us away from our sins — our failures of thought, word, and deed — to believe in the forgiveness and new life He has accomplished for us in the death and resurrection of His Son. For our God is our Father, and fathers discipline their children. He loves us enough to point out when and where we have erred, so that we are not weighed down by false belief, despair, and other great shame or vice.

Thus we do well to listen to God's Word, His own teaching, about giving. St. Paul exhorts: "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor" (Gal 6:6). This means that the local congregation is primary. In other words, everything else that we might give to during the year — laudable and worthy charities — are to be on top of what we give to our local congregation. For the local congregation is the place that serves us with the gifts of Christ's death and resurrection. The local congregation is where our spiritual needs are met when Christ's atonement is preached, when the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed, when we were baptized into the name of the Triune God, and when we partake of the body and blood of the risen and living Lamb of God.

But how much are we to give to this local congregation? His instructions are these: to give regularly (1 Cor 6:1-2), proportionally (1 Cor 16:1-2; 2



Cor 8:12), and generously (2 Cor 8:20) of our first fruits (Gen 4:4; Prov 3:9; Lev 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor 9:7), and love (2 Cor 8:23).

Thus, giving to the church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give it regularly, whenever we have income. We set it aside beforehand,

before anything else is spent. From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. Tithing was a command for them. St. Paul never mentions a tithe. Since a tithe was the bare minimum for the people of Israel in the Old Testament, perhaps St. Paul had more in mind. That aside, however, ten percent is an easy way to figure out an amount. You simply move your weekly, bi-weekly, bi-monthly, monthly, or yearly income one decimal point to the left. And that's it. That's what you put in the offering plate to support your local congregation so that you may continue to be a hearer of God's word by sharing all good things with those who teach it to you.

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy. For it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

### Associate Members & Winter Friends



Please let the Church Office know when you will be leaving us to head north. Also, we ask that you give us your "summer" email address so that you can continue to receive your copy of *Hope's Anchor* up yonder! Naturally, we're sad to see you go, and we pray God's richest blessings on your travels, and we look forward to seeing you again in the fall! Godspeed, safe travels, and God be with you until we meet again!



### Time to Spring Ahead

Don't forget to **SPRING FORWARD** into worship on **March 12<sup>th</sup>**!

Before you go to bed on **March 11<sup>th</sup>**, set your clocks **FORWARD ONE HOUR!**

From our Ministry Teams...

# Let's Spring some Sunshine into our Shut-In's Homes!

Your Human Care Ministry Team is collecting a variety of items to prepare March Baskets to share with those Shut-ins in our congregation in need of a bit of sunshine.

Please bring the following items by **March 12th**, and place in the basket in the Narthex:

- Small tissue packets
- hand sanitizer
- greeting cards & stamps
- hand lotion
- magnifying glass
- large print word search/crossword/Sudoku books
- chap stick
- bags of mints

*Thanks in advance for your help as we spring forward sharing the love of Jesus!*

*Plan Now...Save the Date—*



## Sunday, April 2

8:00AM Sanctuary Worship  
10:30AM Courtyard Worship  
11:30AM Hope Family Picnic

**FOOD, DESSERT CONTEST,  
CORNHOLE, SOFTBALL,  
KIDS GAMES and More!**

*—Invite Friends!*



*...the box in the Narthex, that is!*

Your Missions & Outreach Ministry Team is collecting men's and children's socks for our monthly Feeding the Hungry at the Winter Visitors' Center. As we are always being asked for socks, lets show how much Hope cares and fill that box in the Narthex with lots of socks!



2 CORINTHIANS 4:1

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE REGARDING CHILDREN IN CHURCH IS REPRINTED FROM THE LCMS WEBSITE:

My wife, like most pastors' wives, often acted as a single parent when it came to getting our children ready for church and supervising them during worship. While I sat comfortably in the chancel, she dealt with the wiggles and giggles and crawling under the pews, armed with coloring pages, little bags of Cheerios and a supply of dolls and toys.

Now that I am "retired," I sometimes get to sit with my grandchildren in worship, and I see first-hand the challenges and the joys of parenting a young child in worship – although Grandpa tends to handle the "joys" and turns over the "challenges" to the parents. But Grandpa has learned a few things about children in worship both from the vantage point of the chancel and of the pew:

- ◆ **Children learn about worship by being in worship.** Even though they may not seem to be listening carefully, they are still learning and experiencing the symbolism, the ritual, the sense of "holiness." They know they are in "God's House," and if you watch closely, you may see a 2-year-old fold her hands during a prayer or say a loud "Amen" at an appropriate (or inappropriate) time. Or see her looking up at her somewhat older brother's lips as he says the Lord's Prayer.
- ◆ **Children learn about the fellowship of the Body of Christ by being in church.** Most little ones love being greeted before and after church and in those congregations where "passing the peace" is practiced. When I ask my 3-year-old granddaughter who she saw at church today, she always starts with "Pastor Martin," and then lists a number of other adults and children. Her pastor is her friend, and the congregation is her Christian family.
- ◆ **Be honest about your own feelings, but don't expect the kids to do all the changing.** Let's face it: Some people love to see little children in church; others find them annoying and distracting. If you are one of the latter, then consider making some changes for the sake of these little ones that Jesus loves and who will grow up to be the leaders of the church. Maybe you could move to a section of the church where there are not as many distracting children. Or perhaps you could switch to the early service. **If you are a person who loves to see the little ones in church,** offer your help to that single mother who has trouble coming up to communion with two or three little ones in tow. I don't know what my wife would have done without those "volunteer grandmothers" who were there to help when she went to communion or sang in the choir or just needed a helping hand.
- ◆ **Provide resources for children during worship.** Many congregations provide worship packets or children's bulletins. Often these children's bulletins have coloring pictures or other activities that are geared to the lessons for the day. Many congregations have a "children's sermon" which, in my observation, is as significant to the adults as to the children.
- ◆ **Be "Imitators of Christ."** When the disciples were annoyed by children and tried to send them away, Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God" Matthew 19:13-14. And the Mark 9 discourse on humility, Jesus not only says that those who receive a little child in His name receive Him, but also warn of the consequences of offending one of these little ones who believe in Him. Little children in worship can present some challenges, to be sure, but they are part of our Family in Christ, the joy of the present and the hope for the future.





# GRIEF SHARE<sup>®</sup>

## Tuesdays

### 10:30AM and 6:30PM

Stephen Ministry Room

For more information,  
contact *Lyn Senkarik*





	8th	Keaira Griffin
	11th	Barbara Ahlers
	12th	Sheila Gibbs
	12th	Rose Thomas
	13th	Dean Pfeffer
	14th	Kayleigh Johnson
	14th	Tom Reagin
	16th	Kristin Attalla
	18th	Ray Gonzalez
	18th	Stella Lintz
	19th	Tom Thomas
	19th	LeRoy Worthington
	20th	John Koren
	22nd	Mitchell Aigner
	24th	Brian Heipp
	28th	Dakota Benton
	28th	Kayla Eaton
	29th	Jules Kinhead
	30th	Alan Griffin
	31st	Gordon Jaenecke
	31st	Karen Hermann
	31st	Jackson Venrick



	14th	Burt & Karen Hermann	(47)
	24th	Tom & Lynn Reagin	(27)

# LIVE BOLDLY... Join an ACTION TEAM!



Chaplains at prisons around the country are asking for Bibles to give to the inmates for personal study!

Everyone, all ages...Join us to prepare several cases of Bibles to ship to various locations in need.

We will be marking Gospel passages, writing words of encouragement, and inserting bookmarks as a personal interaction for those receiving their own copy of Scripture. Donations of Christian books, Bibles, or devotionals are encouraged!

Drop in anytime between  
**10:30am & 12:30pm**  
on **SUNDAY, MARCH 5<sup>th</sup>**  
in FELLOWSHIP HALL

See Gloria Warner for further details!

HOLY BIBLE

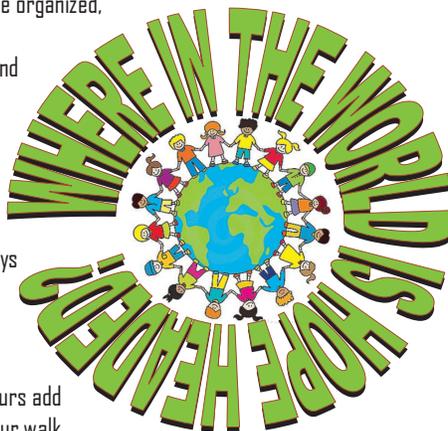


Here we go! We are gearing up to take a **LONG WALK** across the ocean to a special place for a very important celebration! Get your walking shoes ready to cover **5,001 miles** starting in March! We really have to work hard to get ready for this walk, and I have some ideas on how every-

one can add miles to your total every week. As you may remember, **every 15 minutes of exercise equals one mile of walking towards our goal.** So, what do you think? Have some great ideas for exercise? I have a couple of ideas too. **God gives us 168 hours per week—that's a lot of miles!** Well, if we tithe time back to God, that's 16.8 hours that we can spend serving Him in the ways he has gifted each one of us:

- ◆ the garden can be weeded;
- ◆ the plants can be pruned;
- ◆ God's house can be given a shine;
- ◆ the kitchen cabinets can be organized, cleaned & restocked;
- ◆ windows can be cleaned and polished;
- ◆ Fellowship Hall can be given the "once-over," especially after Family Bible Hour;
- ◆ and, many, many more ways to serve our Lord, too numerous to mention.

**WHAT A BLESSING THAT WOULD BE!** ...Plus, all the hours add up to miles and miles towards our walk.



## thank you!



Equipped, Empowered, Engaged... Connecting People to Jesus!

Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ,  
Grace and peace to you in Jesus!  
Your congregation was among the top 25 given to the FLGA district in the past year, and I just wanted to drop a note to personally thank your congregation for their gracious and generous financial support for the work we do together. This partnership has enabled us to provide conferences for our professional church workers, laity and youth; to host training workshops; to assist congregations with calling workers, to helping them manage conflict situations, to providing resources and answers to help with local ministry needs. Because of your faithfulness the district is able to tithe a full 17% of funds received to our Synod for mission work and other needs, while also titling an additional 3% to local needs within the district.

I am grateful for this partnership, for your support, and for the blessing you are to me! Thank you again for all you are doing, and how God is using your congregation well beyond your parish to engage in the Master's business as we connect people to Jesus! May the abundance of His blessings continue to flow to and through your ministry for the sake of Jesus! Again, thank you.  
In His peace,  
Gregory

Rev. Gregory S. Walton, President, FL-GA District LCMS

# LENT BEGINS MARCH 1st

**4:30PM** (*Ash Wed. ONLY*): **Worship w/Imposition of Ashes & Communion**  
**5:15—6:15PM:** **Fellowship Dinner**  
**6:30PM:** **Worship w/Imposition of Ashes & Communion**

**STANDING AT THE CROSS** will be the theme for our Mid-Week Lenten worship on Wednesdays during Lent at our **6:30PM** worship services (please note only *ONE* service each week, *except* for Ash Wednesday). As a Lenten lead-in to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, this series will focus on portions of sermons by Martin Luther for Lent. As we stand with Luther at the foot of the cross each week, we contemplate the ways in which we stand firm in the faith as followers of Christ during this holy season. Our fellowship dinners will be served from **5:15—6:15PM**. Again this year, most of the pastors of our Winter Haven Circuit will be participating in a “round robin,” so each Wednesday we will welcome another of our circuit pastors to our worship as *Pastor Shea* leads worship in their congregations (excluding Ash Wednesday and Holy Week Services).

**Ash Wednesday, March 1:** Standing in the Word | Rev. Dean Pfeffer  
Dinner Host: Youth & Youth Ministry Team  
Menu: Chili (*donated by Wendy's of Lakeland*), Salad, Cornbread & Ice Cream

**March 8:** Standing in Persecution | Rev. Andy Ritchie (*St. Paul, Lakeland*)  
Dinner Host: Christian Growth Ministry  
Menu: Soup, Salad, & Baked Potatoes

**March 15:** Standing in Suffering | Rev. Charles Reich (*Grace, Winter Haven*)  
Dinner Host: Human Care Ministry Team  
Menu: Pasta, Salad, Bread & Dessert

**March 22:** Standing in Truth | Rev. Tod Shouse (*Our Savior, Zephyrhills*)  
Dinner Host: Board of Directors  
Menu: Baked Ziti & Salad

**March 29:** Standing in Prayer | Rev. Jonathan Horsman (*Redeemer, Bartow*)  
Dinner Host: Elders and Health Ministry Teams  
Menu: Macaroni Casserole & Salad

**April 5:** Standing Unafraid | Rev. Shea Pennington  
Dinner Host: Missions & Outreach Ministry Team  
Menu: Shepherds Pie

# LENTEN *Devotions*

You should have received a Lenten devotional book from Lutheran Hour Ministries in your church mailbox. These devotionals for Lent are an awesome resource for our DAILY use during this holy season.

Let us throw these challenges out to you...

- Extra booklets for distribution are located under the mailboxes;
- We will have these booklets available at the Strawberry Festival for anyone who wishes—be sure to make them available!

ALSO...be sure to check out our Florida-Georgia District website ([flgadistrict.org](http://flgadistrict.org)) EVERYDAY for a new Lenten devotional prepared by one of our district's Circuit Visitors (including *Pastor Pfeffer*) or a member of our District Board of Directors (including *Tom Reagin*).



can be heard EVERY Sunday  
at 7:30AM on 540AM

### Topics for this month:

**March 5:** "A Savior Who Fights for You!"  
Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz  
Satan is a bully, but Jesus is the Savior Who fights for you. (Matthew 4:1-11)

**March 12:** "The Power of a New Beginning"  
Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz  
Real help comes to us from the outside. In Christ, new beginnings and greater endings are still possible. (John 3:1-17)

**March 19:** "A Well That Runs Deep Because You Need It"  
Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz  
Jesus is determined to meet you today with the water of grace only He can give. (John 4:5-26)

**March 26:** "God's Got It In For Me"  
Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus  
God can use our troubles and crosses for a higher purpose that we may not understand until we reach heaven. (John 9:1-41)



# LENT Lent LENT Lent

## Witness Opportunities for Every Member

Give to individuals encountered through everyday activities a simple, "Have a Blessed Day" greeting along with a devotional booklet:

- ◇ drive-thru restaurant workers, bank tellers, restaurant servers (leave *WITH* tip), cashiers and baggers at stores, and gas stations *ONLY* after making a purchase;
- ◇ toll booth operators, parking lot attendants;
- ◇ Enclose a copy when paying bills;
- ◇ Leave a quantity in waiting areas: Doctor's office, hospital, restaurant, bank, funeral home, etc. *only with permission*. Remember to check back and keep the location stocked. The business may also be interested in keeping a good thing going—let them know you can supply topical booklets too.
- ◇ Take copies with you when traveling- you never know whom Lord wants you to meet!

## Bigger Challenge for Every Member

Commit to reading with a friend who does not yet know Jesus as Savior or who has drifted from church involvement. Challenge yourself and your friend to take 5 minutes a day for reflection. Make plans to discuss. Listening is most important! Surprise them by asking them to help work at a church activity—an easy way to get to know people and for you to discuss more.

*(These tips are from Lutheran Hour Ministries)*

# SHARE JESUS WITH A FRIEND

Come and See...Worship with Us!



**LENTEN**  
*Schedule*  
**SUNDAYS**

8:00 & 10:30AM—Worship  
9:15AM—Family Bible Hour  
4:00PM—Spanish Worship

**WEDNESDAYS**

4:30PM (Ash Wed. only)—Worship  
5:15-6:15PM—Fellowship Dinner  
6:30PM—Worship

## FAMILY BIBLE HOUR @ 9:15AM

### ADULTS

**CROSSROADS OF LENT:** Crossroads. They are there for all of us especially during Lent. A choice point. Which way? What waits at each of those choices? Which way does my heart call me to go? Which way is the way of Christ? Together we will look at some of the crossroads of confession, betrayal, judgment, compassion, declaration and obedience to see how the cross of Christ leads us to follow the path of God's will.

Leader: Pastor Pfeffer

**WATCH THE LAMB, WALK IN VICTORY:** The darkness-shattering light spoken into existence by God in Genesis explodes into glorious, unfiltered radiance in REVELATION. Here, God's story, revealed in His Word, draws to a stunning consummation. REVELATION unveils God's perfect justice and glorious design for those Jesus redeems from every tribe, language, people and nation. God's children find HOPE, PEACE AND REST in the unfailing purposes of God. Join us for a verse-by-verse study of REVELATION. Leader: Gloria Warner

### YOUNG ADULTS

**LIVE.BOLDLY:** Join us in 2017, as we look and learn from Christians throughout the ages—from Abraham to Paul to Martin Luther—how to live boldly in Christ so that we may "continue to speak the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31) in our everyday lives through actions and attitude in order to connect people to Jesus. #LiveBoldly Leader: Pastor Shea

### GRADES 9—12

**LIVE.BOLDLY:** Join us in 2017, as we look and learn from Christians throughout the ages—from Abraham to Paul to Martin Luther—how to live boldly in Christ so that we may "continue to speak the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31) in our everyday lives through actions and attitude in order to connect people to Jesus. #LiveBoldly Leader: Pastor Shea

### PRE-SCHOOL—GRADE 8

**GROWING IN CHRIST:** The fall quarter begins with an overview of the New Testament beginning with the birth of John the Baptist through the calling of Jesus' first disciples. Leaders: Yolanda Heipp, Tracy MacDonald, Liz Pfeffer, Ellen Whitehurst



## LENT begins with ASH WEDNESDAY on March 1st

Lent is without question, the most somber of all the seasons of the church year. Its color is purple signi-

fying both the majesty of our Lord as well as our call to repentance.

During this season, it is the custom of the church to remove or "bury" the singing of the Alleluia's until they are sung with great joy on the Day of Resurrection (Easter Sunday). So during this season, we will bury our song of Alleluia until Easter. Also omitted during this season is our hymn of praise following the confession and absolution so that on Easter we can sing with the greatest of joy—This is the feast of victory for our God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Lent, as you realize lasts 40 days (not include Sunday's). The reason for the 40 days is simple. The Gospel reading for the First Sunday in Lent is the account of Jesus' temptation while he was in the wilderness for 40 days. For many the practice has also evolved to "give up something for Lent." This practice when done for the right reasons—to better focus on what Christ has done and "given up" for us can and often does lead us to a much deeper understanding and appreciation for the Lenten season. But we must be careful when doing so that our motivation is not to gain favor with God, but to truly deny ourselves and take up our cross. It is not wrong to deny ourselves things we enjoy (meat, coffee, sweets etc.) but again, we must be sure our heart is motivated by Gospel and not Law.

While Lent is a very somber season it is, in this Pastor's opinion, one of the most beautiful for it affords us that special opportunity to reflect and meditate on the cost of our salvation. I encourage you this Lent to take the time and come to Calvary's holy mountain. The color of the season is purple~ the color of royalty, as we see Jesus as our King of Glory but also the color of repentance.



## STEPHEN MINISTRY MARCH CALENDAR

**Support Group**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 9**  
**6:30PM**



# Scrip Order Form



Restaurant	#	Value	Total \$
Applebee's		\$10 or \$25	
Arby's		\$10	
Bob Evans		\$20	
Burger King		\$10	
Cheese Cake Factory		\$25	
Chili's		\$10 or \$25	
Chipolte		\$10	
Cracker Barrel		\$25	
Denny's		\$10	
Dunkin Donuts		\$10	
Golden Coral		\$25	
Honey Baked Ham		\$25	
Longhorn Steakhouse		\$25 or \$50	
Macaroni Grill		\$25	
O'Charley's		\$25	
Outback Steakhouse		\$25	
P.F. Chang		\$25	
Panera Bread		\$10 or \$25	
Pizza Hut		\$10	
Red Robin		\$10 or \$25	
Starbucks		\$10 or \$25	
Steak & Shake		\$10	
Subway		\$10 or \$25	
Taco Bell		\$10	
T.G.I. Fridays		\$10 or \$25	
Wendy's		\$10	

Gas Stations	#	Value	Total \$
BP		\$50	
Chevron		\$50	
Marathon		\$25	
Mobil		\$50	
Shell		\$25 or \$ 50	
Sunoco		\$50	

Grocery Stores	#	Value	Total \$
Albertsons		\$25	
Sam's Club		\$25	
Winn Dixie		\$50	

Stores	#	Value	Total \$
Aeropostale		\$25	
Amazon.com		\$25	
AMC Theatres		\$25	
Babies 'R' Us		\$10 or \$25	
Barnes & Noble		\$25	
Bath & Body Works		\$10 or \$25	
Bed, Bath & Beyond		\$25	
Best Buy		\$25	
Books-A-Million		\$15	
CVS		\$25	
Disney Store		\$25	
Home Depot		\$25	
iTunes		\$25	
Jo Ann Fabrics		\$25	
Kmart		\$25	
Kohl's		\$25	
Lane Bryant		\$25	
Lowe's		\$25 or \$50	
Macy's		\$25	
Marshalls		\$25	
Michaels		\$25	
PetSmart		\$25	
Ross Dress for Less		\$25	
Staples		\$25	
Target		\$25	
Toys 'R' Us		\$10 or \$25	
Visa		\$50	
Walgreens		\$25	
WalMart		\$10 or \$25	

ORDER TOTAL

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YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

HOPE MEMBER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

(OPTIONAL)  
YOUTH I AM SPONSORING: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: **HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Scrip orders will be in your church mailbox  
the Sunday after orders are due.



## Hope Lutheran Church

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Plant City, FL 33563

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813-707-1244 fax

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www.hopeplantcity.com

Rev. Dean Pfeffer  
Senior Pastor

Rev. Shea Pennington  
Associate Pastor

Rev. Miguel Sanabria  
Spanish Ministry

Christine Mansell  
Director of Music

Lyn Senkarik  
Deaconess

Joyce Van Matre, RN  
Parish Nurse

Jessica Griffin  
Church Secretary

*Jesus loves you!*



Our Sunday morning sermons are available at  
[www.hopeplantcity.com/sermon](http://www.hopeplantcity.com/sermon)



# Should I Force My Child to go to Church & Sunday School?

What does a parent do when their child says they don't want to attend church and Sunday School? Should the parent give in? Like many other parents, should the parent let the child decide for himself/herself if or when they want to attend?

Parents occasionally ask the pastor, "*What should I do when this happens? Should I force my child to go to church and Sunday School when he doesn't want to go?*"

This is how your Pastor answers this question: (without any hesitation or delay) "**YES!!** You should force your child to go with *no further discussion about the matter!*" Does that answer surprise you? It really shouldn't.

After all, how do we answer our children when they come to breakfast and tell us that they don't want to go to school anymore? You know. They go anyway! How do we answer them when they come in all grimy and dirty and tell us they won't take a bath before they go to bed? You know. They take a bath and that settles the issue. Or how about when they decide they don't want to go to the doctor for those shots or the dentist for a filling? You know. They go and that settles the issue. You see, children, because they are children, do not always know what's best for them. They are unable to make mature decisions. This is where the parents come in. You must remember that God placed you in the lives of your children as a parent.. He did not put you there as a friend. And as a parent, you are to do what is best for your child even if they "think" they know what is best.

Why then should we hesitate in the area of spiritual guidance and growth which comes through the Word of God? Waiting and letting your child decide what and when to do about this is disastrous. What it boils down to is simple—God put parents into the lives of their children to be PARENTS. God didn't put you there to be their buddy or best friend, God made you to be the PARENT and as hard as it may be sometimes...we all need to be that in the lives of our children—a parent who knows what is best for our children.

By the way, if we expect our children to attend church and Sunday School, then we as parents (ROLE MODELS), should by all means set the example for them by our attendance and participation. We have to practice what we preach or we will be guilty of the worst kind of hypocrisy. Remember, Christ and His Word are either most important to us or they are not important at all. Attend worship regularly—with your children! See to it that they (and you too) are in Sunday School and Bible

Class—and watch your family G R O W .

