



# Welcome to Hope

## SUNDAYS

8:00 & 10:30AM—Worship

10:30AM—Live-Stream

4:00PM—Spanish Worship w/Communion

## ADVENT WEDNESDAYS

4:30PM—Traditional Worship

6:30PM—Family Worship w/Live-Stream

### **OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**

***“Anchored in Christ, Empowered by the Spirit, Connecting People to Jesus”***

*We are glad you are taking the time to worship our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with us this weekend! We pray God’s blessings on your worship and time spent among us at Hope Lutheran Church! We ask you to please take the time to fill in the Friendship pad (be sure to give us your name and address) and feel free to indicate any prayer concerns on the reverse side of the pad. We are a “Family-Friendly Church” and encourage the participation of children in our worship. However, we realize there are times when children can become disruptive to other worshipers, and for that reason there is a cry room located in the back of the church for your use. Children’s worship bags are available in the narthex for your use during the service (see an usher or elder). Please return the bag following the service to the “Worship Bag Tree.” We encourage you to join us for any and all activities at Hope in the week ahead!*

***IMPORTANT NOTES:*** *for the sanctity of our worship and the benefit of those around you, please refrain from excessive talking in the narthex and sanctuary, and turn off all cell phones, pagers, etc. Please time entrances and exits during congregational singing to minimize distraction to our worshipping community. Following our worship, please make every effort to leave God’s House just as you found it. Please do not bring coffee, cans of soda or bottled water into the sanctuary for your use before or even during the service. Also, please be sure to remove any “used” tissues from the pews or hymnal racks. Your help in keeping God’s house neat and clean will most certainly be appreciated! Thank you!*

*Hope: Anchored in Christ*



**Please turn off or silence your cell phone and NO food or drinks in the Sanctuary.**

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*Activities This Week at Hope:*

<b>Sunday 12/13</b>		<b>YOUTH SCRIP ORDERS DUE</b>
	8:00 & 10:30	Worship
	1:00	Dress Rehearsal: Christmas Program
	4:00	Spanish Worship w/Communion
	6:30	Adult ZOOM Bible Study
	7:00	Youth ZOOM
<b>Monday 12/14</b>	9:00	Quilting
	9:00	Circuit Pastors @ Grace, Winter Haven
	5:30	Bell Choir
	6:30	Music Leaders
<b>Tuesday 12/15</b>	7:00	Men's Small Group ZOOM
<b>Wednesday 12/16</b>	4:30 & 6:30	Advent Worship
	5:15	Praise Team
	8:00	Spanish ZOOM Prayer & Bible Study
<b>Thursday 12/17</b>	6:30	Board of Directors ZOOM Meeting
<b>Friday 12/18</b>	6:00	Filming: Christmas Program
<b>Sunday 12/20</b>	8:00 & 10:30	Worship w/Christmas Program
	11:45	Youth Christmas Party
	4:00	Spanish Worship w/Communion
	5:00	Spanish Christmas Event
	7:00	Youth ZOOM

*Worship Attendance / Communion:*

**Sunday, December 6, 2020:**

**Worship: 8:00: 23    10:30: 44**

**Spanish Worship: 4:00: 34/17**

**Wednesday, December 9, 2020:**

**Worship: 4:30: 16    6:30: 17**

General Fund: \$12,038.31

*Stewardship Perspective:*

**1 Thessalonians 5:18 – “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”** Christians express their thanks to God in many ways: in prayer, in giving to the Lord’s work, in acts of service to others, and in faithful living in their daily callings. Everything we do to honor God in our lives is a means of returning thanks for the Lord’s many gifts to us.

*Large Print editions of our Sunday worship folders are available from the ushers. If you are in need of one, don't hesitate to ask!*



# Third Sunday In Advent

December 13, 2020

## AS WE GATHER

*In our Advent preparations today, John the apostle and evangelist adds his testimony along with John the Baptist, holding before us the joy of Jesus as the light who gives to all who receive Him and believe in His name the right to become children of God. Because of our Lord's continual supply of grace by His Word and Sacraments, we are enabled with Him to "greatly rejoice in the LORD"; for by His Spirit of righteousness we lead lives of holiness of faith. This holiness continually rejoices in the Lord, prays, and give thanks in all circumstances. With John the apostle and John the Baptist, we rejoice, always prepared by faith to welcome and worship our Lord and Savior, who comes to us daily with healing and deliverance.*

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

## RINGING OF THE BELLS

## PRELUDE

*"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*



## OPENING SONG

*"Here I Am to Worship"*

ABS (3) 3

**Light of the world, You stepped down into darkness, Opened my eyes let me see  
Beauty that made this heart adore You, Hope of a life spent with You.**

*(Chorus)*

**So here I am to worship; Here I am to bow down; Here I am to say that You're my God.  
You're altogether lovely, Altogether worthy, Altogether wonderful to me.**

**King of all days, O so highly exalted, Glorious in heaven above,  
Humbly You came to the earth You created, All for love's sake became poor.**

*(Chorus)*

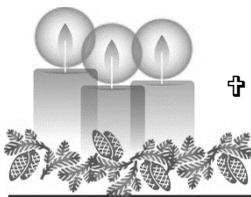
"Here I Am to Worship", words and music by Tim Hughes, © 2000 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing), CCLI License No. 759305

## INVOCATION, CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

**P:** In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** Amen.

- P: Behold, the true light has come into the world. Let us enter into His presence, confessing our sins and receiving His forgiveness.
- C: Lord God, our heavenly Father, hear us as we confess the darkness of our waywardness and sin, especially our reluctance or refusal to rejoice, pray, or give thanks amid the troubles we have brought upon ourselves. Make us truly repentant, that we may receive the holiness of faith in our Savior Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of our sins. Amen.**
- P: The true light has come. To all who receive Him, He makes to be the children of God. Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you. And in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C: Amen.**



† **LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH** †

- P: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,  
**C: the light no darkness can overcome.**  
 P: Let Your light scatter the darkness  
**C: and illumine Your Church.**

**RESPONSE**

*“We Light the Advent Candle”*

*(tune: LSB 343)*

**We light the Advent candle And wait for Christ to come.  
 With hope, we trust the promise That He will bring us home.  
 Our hope is in our Savior Who wins for us God’s favor.  
 We wait with growing light Till God makes all things right!**

**We light the Advent candle And thank the Lord for rest.  
 With peace, we know our Jesus Has come to be our guest.  
 This peace beyond all knowing Within our hearts is glowing.  
 We wait with growing light Till God makes all things right!**

**We light the Advent candle And sing with cheerful heart.  
 With joy, we spread the message— A blessing to impart.  
 Our joy is never ending; The Son to us is sending.  
 We wait with growing light Till God makes all things right!**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ,

**C: we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation;**

P: for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God,

**C: now and forever. Amen.**



## OLD TESTAMENT READING

*Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11*

*(The year of the Lord's favor)*

<sup>1</sup>The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup>to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. <sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. <sup>8</sup>For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup>Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. <sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## EPISTLE

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

*(Rejoice always)*

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup>Abstain from every form of evil. <sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

## RESPONSE

*"Emmanuel"*

BOB 44

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel, His name is called Emmanuel;  
God with us, revealed in us; His name is called Emmanuel. *(Repeat)***

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## HOLY GOSPEL

John 1:6-8, 19-28

*(The testimony of John the Baptist)*

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

C: *(Spoken)* **Glory to You, O Lord!**

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. <sup>19</sup>And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." <sup>24</sup>(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, <sup>27</sup>even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." <sup>28</sup>These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord!

C: *(Spoken)* **Praise to You, O Christ!**

**SONG OF THE DAY**      *“Joy To The World (Unspeakable Joy)”*

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King.  
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the world! The Savior reigns; Let all their songs employ.  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

*(Bridge)*    **Joy, unspeakable joy! An overflowing well; No tongue can tell!  
Joy, unspeakable joy! It rises in my soul, never lets me go!**

**He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love.**

*(Repeat Bridge)*

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**SERMON**

*“Joy? Really?”      Isaiah 61:10; 1 Thess. 5:16 & 18  
Rev. Dean Pfeffer*

**SONG OF RESPONSE**

*“Come to the Child”*

*ABS (2) 75*

**Come to the Child of Bethlehem. See Him, the Son of God and Man.  
Think of the life that now has filled our flesh and bone.  
Come to the Child in wonder now. Think of our God— imagine how  
Heaven could fill this simple Child of Bethlehem.**

**Come and worship. Come and honor Him.  
Come and bow, Now lay your pride and plans aside.  
Come and praise Him. Lift your heart to Him.  
He is your God! He is your hope, and He is love!**

**Come to the Child of Bethlehem. See Him, the Son of God and Man.  
Think of the life that now has filled our flesh and bone.  
Come to the Child in wonder now. Think of our God— imagine how  
Heaven could fill this simple Child of Bethlehem.**

**Worship your Lord, the simple Child of Bethlehem.**

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## APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

**P:** Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. Show us Your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us Your salvation! Keep Your saints from every folly that would turn them from Your words of peace. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** You sent John to proclaim the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Richly and daily forgive our sins and the sins of all believers. Bless *Matthew*, our Synod president; *Greg*, our district president; *Dean*, our circuit visitor; and all pastors in Christ. Gather and preserve Your Holy Christian Church by Your voice, and send us faithful preachers who will not deny but confess Your truth. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** Dear Father, be the source of strength and comfort in every home. Bless the children of our families, that every darkness would be lightened by Your Son's gracious visitation. Sanctify them completely, that their whole spirit, soul and body may be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** Give wisdom and success to our nation and its leaders. Behold in mercy all who are in authority over us and those newly elected. Preserve our land and its citizens in peace and harmony, and protect all who serve in harm's way. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**P:** Receive our thanks in every circumstance for Your kindness in Christ Jesus and the certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life with Him. Grant healing, we pray, especially for *Douglas Brown*, *Ernie Edelman*, *Jerrie Edelman*, *Gary Smith*, and *Millie Wetz*, and grant comfort to the *Nash family* and all who mourn. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

P: Into Your hands, Father, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever who taught us to pray:

C: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### CLOSING PRAYER

God, reignite the hearts of us all to have a passion for the Gospel. Teach our church to share the Gospel with others. Teach us to live as those who are true bearers of the good news of Jesus Christ. Remind us of our purpose. Convict us of our purpose. Empower us to live our purpose. In Jesus name. Amen.

### BENEDICTION

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

P: We are now entering the mission field!

C: **'Here am I! Send me!'**

### CLOSING HYMN

*"Joy to the World"*

LSB 387



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her  
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their songs em -  
3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the  
4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him  
ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
ground; He comes to make His bless - ings  
prove The glo - ries of His righ - teous -



room And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture  
 plains Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing  
 flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is  
 ness And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His



sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, Far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, And won - ders, won - ders of His love.

Text and tune: Public domain

POSTLUDE

“Antioch”

Ronald Nelson

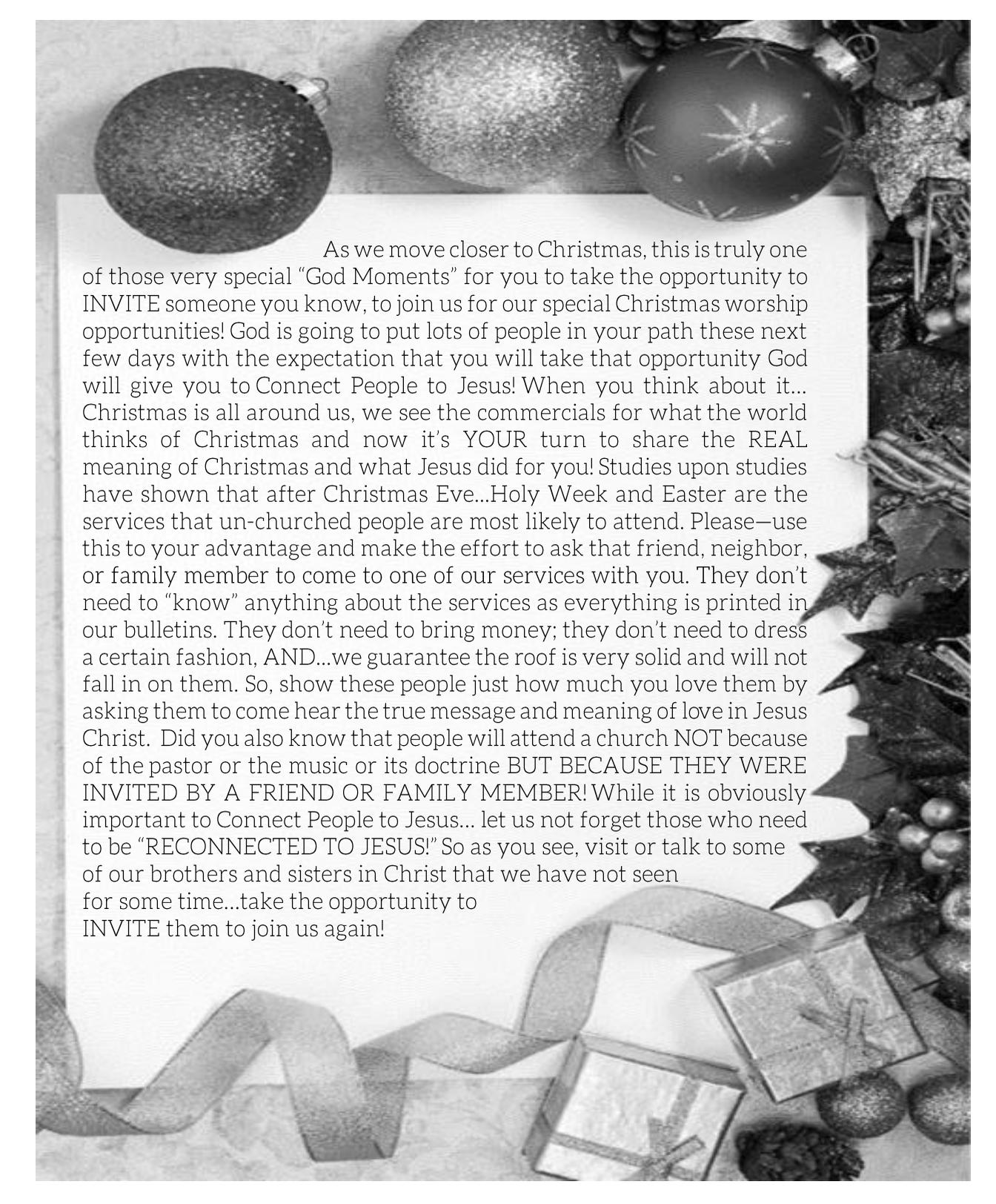
## Building Hope for the Future: Impact Phase



Our November contributions to the Building Hope for the Future Campaign have brought our total to \$433,614, which is more than 64% of our goal of \$685,501. Thank you to all who share the blessings that God has given, and we pray for your continued support. You have faithfully worked toward providing Hope with a new home for our Mission and Ministry, even in this challenging year of 2020. We thank God as we watch our progress. Be well and have a very Merry Christmas!!

To give online to *Building Hope for the Future*, simply go to Hope’s website ([hopeplancity.com](http://hopeplancity.com)) and click “GIVE HERE.”





As we move closer to Christmas, this is truly one of those very special “God Moments” for you to take the opportunity to INVITE someone you know, to join us for our special Christmas worship opportunities! God is going to put lots of people in your path these next few days with the expectation that you will take that opportunity God will give you to Connect People to Jesus! When you think about it... Christmas is all around us, we see the commercials for what the world thinks of Christmas and now it's YOUR turn to share the REAL meaning of Christmas and what Jesus did for you! Studies upon studies have shown that after Christmas Eve...Holy Week and Easter are the services that un-churched people are most likely to attend. Please—use this to your advantage and make the effort to ask that friend, neighbor, or family member to come to one of our services with you. They don't need to “know” anything about the services as everything is printed in our bulletins. They don't need to bring money; they don't need to dress a certain fashion, AND...we guarantee the roof is very solid and will not fall in on them. So, show these people just how much you love them by asking them to come hear the true message and meaning of love in Jesus Christ. Did you also know that people will attend a church NOT because of the pastor or the music or its doctrine BUT BECAUSE THEY WERE INVITED BY A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER! While it is obviously important to Connect People to Jesus... let us not forget those who need to be “RECONNECTED TO JESUS!” So as you see, visit or talk to some of our brothers and sisters in Christ that we have not seen for some time...take the opportunity to INVITE them to join us again!

# Connecting Points

**TODAY:** We continue in the beautiful season of Advent. The season of Advent is comprised of **four consecutive Sundays** leading up to Christmas. The themes of Advent are to: <sup>1</sup>prepare us to celebrate the birth of our Lord once again, and <sup>2</sup>remind us that we are to be ready for that great day when our Lord returns again in great glory. One of the symbols of the season is the Advent wreath with its four candles. Advent is a season of hope and anticipation for the Christian. The color of Advent is BLUE~ the color of both hope and anticipation.



**LECTORS:** Please remember to keep your mask ON until you are at the lectern to read and replace it before you head back to your pew. Thanks in advance for your assistance!

**THANK YOU:** to *Hope's health care professionals* who are assisting by taking temperatures **every Sunday and Wednesday before worship**. Also, thank you to our *ushers and Elders* for their extra work **following each worship service** to wipe down the pews with sanitizing wipes and assist in so many ways to help protect everyone who enters our sanctuary. (FYI—*pews, door handles, and restrooms are wiped down after each service.*)



**POINSETTIA ORDERS:** We have plants reserved to adorn our Lord's altar for our Christmas worship. Cost per plant is \$9.00 each. Be sure to reserve your plant early. Deadline for orders is **Sunday, December 20 or until all are adopted.** **STILL AVAILABLE: 25**



**TIS THE SEASON:** for you to *THINK & PRAY* about that special person or family you want to invite to **Christmas worship** with you. We have special invitations for you to share available **TODAY & NEXT SUNDAY.**



**GIFT CARDS TO SUPPORT HOPE'S YOUTH:** The last day to order Scrip gift cards in time for Christmas is **TODAY.** Order forms are available on the youth bulletin board in the Narthex and on our website [hopeplantcity.com](http://hopeplantcity.com) (click on "Docs & Links" then "Documents").



**ADVENT DEVOTIONALS:** are under the mailboxes. These devotionals are produced by *Lutheran Hour Ministries*. Be sure to take 2...one for you and for a friend! Also available **this year** will be Advent devotions by the *Circuit Visitors and Vice Presidents of our Florida Georgia District*. These devotionals will be available daily at [flgadistrict.org](http://flgadistrict.org). Pastor Pfeffer's devotion is scheduled for **December 18.**



**CHILDREN'S ADVENT CALENDARS:** are under the mailboxes. There is a booklet along with a calendar to accompany the devotional booklet.



**KEYBOARD ADDITION:** Perhaps you may have noticed, but probably not. There is a plexiglass shield mounted to the keyboard to assist our song leader and protect those seated near the keyboard. This shield was installed in June so that whoever is at the keyboard does not need to wear a mask as they lead congregational singing.



**SPEAKING OF MASKS:** THANK YOU for your adherence to our "wear your mask" policy on our campus. While we realize it is not the ideal situation to wear a mask while singing, it is done for the protection of those seated around you. Therefore, please do not remove your mask during congregational singing. Again, thanks for helping stop the spread of this virus as we work and worship together!



**REMINDER:** that all ALL announcements for our worship bulletins **MUST** be received by **NOON, TUESDAYS** to be included. Verbal announcements must be requested by **Wednesday, Noon**. Thanks in advance for your assistance!

**ADVENT IS HERE!** Hard to believe isn't it?! That means our **mid-week worship Advent worship opportunities have begun**. We gather for worship **each Wednesday** during Advent (**December 2, 9, 16**). As in the past, there is a **4:30** traditional style worship and a **6:30** intergenerational style worship. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing pandemic, there are **NO** fellowship meals served **this year**. Join us for the fun, fellowship, and celebration as we prepare for the coming of our King!



**PLEASE REMEMBER:** If you are unable to complete the weekly surveys (available at [hopeplantcity.com](http://hopeplantcity.com)) for worship attendance, please be sure to contact *Jessica* in the church office **by NOON, Thursday** so that we can work to insure proper social distancing during worship. We also ask for the health and safety of all gathered here, that everyone please WEAR YOUR MASK while on campus. Your help is always appreciated!



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Watch your EMAIL for the ZOOM link for our meeting on **THURSDAY (December 17<sup>th</sup>) at 6:30PM**.



**SPECIAL SERVICE NOTE:** As decided by our *Elders Ministry Team*, due to the Christmas program being shown **during our worship NEXT SUNDAY** (both services), we will **NOT** celebrate the Lord's Supper at either service. Communion will be celebrated at the **10:30PM service on Christmas Eve** and again on **Christmas Morning**.

**OUR CHRISTIAN LOVE & SYMPATHY:** to the family of *Mary Lou Nash* who was called home to be with her Lord on **Monday evening**. A memorial is tentatively planned for **January 23<sup>rd</sup>** at *Immanuel, Brandon* with *Pastor Pfeffer & President Walton* officiating. Please keep *Mark* in your thoughts and prayers during this time. "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.*" Psalm 116



**PLAN NOW:** because help is needed for the next *MOVING HOPE* mobile food pantry on **Monday, December 28<sup>th</sup>**. All those available to assist, please be here by **5:30PM** ready to serve those in need.



**YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ARE INVITED:** to a free, pandemic-safe, journey to "Bethlehem" hosted by the residents of the *Country Oaks community in north Lakeland* **every evening through January 2**. The streets are lined with luminaries and many of the yards display illuminated wooden figurines leading the way to Bethlehem. The humble nativity scene is found at one house in the rear of the neighborhood – *1202 O'Daniel Loop N, Lakeland, 33809*. The people of *Country Oaks* enjoy offering this experience each year to remind everyone who drives through that the birth of the Savior Jesus is at the heart of Christmas! Good news ... no masks required to drive through and witness the sights!



**TO BE INSTALLED:** at *Christ, Lakeland* on **Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:00PM** is *Rev. Christopher Hazzard*. The congregation is invited to join our brothers and sisters at *Christ* for this special occasion.



**2021 FLOWER CHART:** is NOW posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Altar flowers are a great way to mark a birthday, anniversary, special occasion, or to remember someone special. The price this year will be \$18.00 per side (\$36.00 for both sides). There is a limit to 2 bouquets per week. Please be sure to **PRINT CLEARLY** when you sign up.



**ANOTHER COVID-19 CHANGE:** Due to the ongoing pandemic and the rise in cases in both Florida and Georgia, our Florida Georgia District leadership has voted to move our District Convention scheduled for **June, 2021** to **October, 2021**. HOWEVER, we are expecting a resolution from our LCMS President, that all District Conventions (all District Conventions are to take place in 2021) be moved to 2022 and the LCMS Synodical Convention scheduled for 2022 be moved to 2023. The impact will be that all those currently serving in elected positions will continue to serve until the next convention. That means that *Pastor Pfeffer* will remain as *Winter Haven Circuit Visitor* **until either October or June, 2022**. *President Walton* is encouraging all of our congregations to support the change to 2022 for District Conventions.



**DID YA EVER DREAM:** of going to see *the Passion Play in Oberammergau Germany*? As you may realize, due to COVID-19, the 2020 presentation of the Passion Play was postponed to 2022. This play has occurred every 10 years since 1634. Have you ever dreamed of a Danube River cruise? Well, *Pastor & Liz Pfeffer* will be hosting this amazing trip in **September, 2022** joining many other LCMS Lutherans for this trip of a lifetime. *Former LCMS President, Jerry Kieschnick* will serve as the Bible Study leader for our time together. See *Pastor or Liz* if you are interested in joining them and a few of our Hope members on this inspirational and relaxing adventure!



## Growing in the Grace of Giving

Christmas is coming. It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased” (Luke 2:14)! We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in manger but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God.

God’s people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people. And He commanded them to feast upon it (Deuteronomy 16). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (Deut. 16:10, 15, 17).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas but throughout all the year. We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us. Let us, like them, give generously of the first fruits of our income, which He gives, so that all may know and enjoy the salvation He gives and the joy we have in the Savior born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord.



## **HOPE**

### **Lutheran Church**

Rev. Dean R. Pfeiffer  
**Senior Pastor**

Rev. Shea R. Pennington  
**Associate Pastor**

Rev. Miguel Sanabria, Jr.  
**Spanish Ministry**

Christine Mansell  
**Director of Music**

Jessica Griffin  
**Church Secretary**

2001 N. Park Road  
Plant City, FL 33563-2038

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[hopelutheranpc@gmail.com](mailto:hopelutheranpc@gmail.com)

[www.hopeplantcity.com](http://www.hopeplantcity.com)

To My Family of Hope Lutheran Church:

*"Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord"*  
1 Timothy 1:2

First, Holly and I want to thank you so much for all your prayers, your words of encouragement and wisdom. At this time, I want to let you know that after much prayer, meditation and conversation, God has made His will clear to us. Our Lord is sending us to St. Stephens Lutheran Church in Hickory, NC.

Hope, it has been such a privilege to be your pastor these past four-and-a-half years and to partner with you in the mission of *Connecting People to Jesus*. Holly and I love you so much and, honestly, it is difficult for us to go. Like Abraham, God is calling and sending us at this time, and so we must go. Please know that while we may be physically distanced, we are not spiritually distanced. God's Spirit and love unites us and connects us even when we are physically apart.

Also, I want to let you know that Sunday, December 20th will be my last day. Please if any of you have anything you want to say or talk about, call me or text at 813-368-8831. I would love to talk with you in person, or if you prefer, over the phone.

May the Holy Spirit continue to equip and empower you in *Building Hope for the Future by Connecting People to Jesus* and making disciples, who make disciples.

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God [the Father] and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all," 2 Cor. 13:14*

In Jesus' Love,  
*Pastor Shea*  
Rev. Shea Pennington

# ADVENT WORSHIP

*Advent begins November 29*

## SUNDAYS

**8:00 & 10:30AM — Worship**

**10:30AM — Live-Stream**

**4:00PM — Spanish Worship**

## WEDNESDAYS

**4:30PM — Traditional Worship**

**6:30PM — Family Worship  
w/Live Stream**

*Christmas Eve, December 24*

**6:30PM — Candlelight Worship & Live-Stream**

**10:30PM — Candlelight Worship w/Communion & Live-Stream**

*Christmas Day, December 25*

**10:30AM — Christmas Worship w/Communion & Live-Stream**



# P R E P A R E Y E

In this special mid-week Advent worship series, we contemplate the many ways we prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christ Child on Christmas, taking cues from the psalms of old and from those whom God chose to play a part in the story of our Lord's birth. As we draw near to the manger bed of our Savior from sin and death, our hearts prepare him room for his everlasting love.

## ADVENT WEDNESDAYS

**4:30PM—Traditional Worship**

**6:30PM—Family Worship**

*(NO fellowship meals this year)*

**DECEMBER 16: Praise** (Psalm 30:4 & Luke 1:41-44): We celebrate the upcoming arrival of our Savior through songs and shouts of praise as we prepare for him. Elizabeth, in her greeting of Mary, provides a benchmark for rejoicing with others over the good news of salvation in Jesus, even as we wait.

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Sign up for next week's worship at  
[hopeplantcity.com](http://hopeplantcity.com)  
or call the church office at 813-752-4622

# CHRISMONS



Chrismons once again adorn the trees in our chancel thanks to the many hands who lovingly decorate our church and make it so warm and inviting. The word Chrismon is a contraction of the two words—Christ and Monogram. A Chrismon Tree decorated with symbols from Christian history tells a story of the true meaning of Christmas.

**Shell**—Signified the Baptism of Christ

**Jerusalem Cross**—A symbol of the Crusades

**Descending Dove**—Represents the Holy Spirit

**Stylized Fish**—Early Christians used the fish as an easily made and recognized symbol.

**Sun**—A symbol of the Son of Righteousness

**Fleur de Lis**—The flower of the virgin Mary

**Butterfly**—A symbol of New Life and The Resurrection

**I.H.S.**—The first three letters of Jesus in Greek.

**Anchor Cross**—An early symbol meaning steadfastness and hope

**Shepherd's Crook**—A cross, hung with Alpha and Omega to show that this staff refers to the Good Shepherd.

**The Fish**—Use of the Fish as a symbol for early Christians developed because the letters of the Greek word for fish, Ichthus, formed and acrostic on the phrase Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.

**Three Entwined Circles**—A symbol for the Holy Trinity

**The Crown**—A symbol of the Kingship of Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

**Chi Rho with Alpha and Omega**—The Chi Rho is the oldest monogram of Christ. The Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, thus the beginning and end are symbolic.



## More about our Trees

The two trees on the floor of the church are the Hope Family trees. These are the trees that hold the many beautiful Chrismons described left. These trees also have a Christmas ball with the name of a Hope Family member. Each family of Hope is represented by one of the clear balls on the trees. The trees by the altar are known as the: Sinners' tree (lectern side) and the Saints' tree (pulpit side).

The Sinners' tree is decorated with 33 red balls, to remind of the forbidden fruit of which God commanded Adam & Eve not to eat and also is the age of our Lord at the time of His death on the cross. The ribbon through the tree is a reminder to us of the serpent—Satan who tempted Adam & Eve to eat of the fruit.

On the Saints' tree, you will find 33 white decorations representing the purity of our Lord. The three white streamers remind us of the grace we receive from our Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the lights are symbolic of Christ, who is the Light of the world.

Sign up at [HOPEPLANTCITY.COM](http://HOPEPLANTCITY.COM)  
for handouts & login access

# ENDURING FAITH

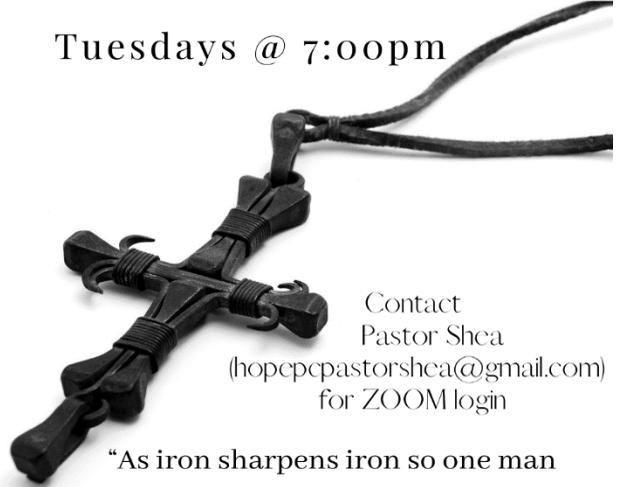
zoom

with Pastor Pfeffer  
**SUNDAYS, 6:30-7:30PM**

*MEN'S small group!*

## **FORGED: MEN SHARPENING MEN IN THEIR FAITH**

Tuesdays @ 7:00pm



Contact  
Pastor Shea  
([hopepcpastorshea@gmail.com](mailto:hopepcpastorshea@gmail.com))  
for ZOOM login

“As iron sharpens iron so one man  
sharpens another.” Proverbs 17:27

zoom  
**HEY Youth!!!**  
zoom into study this month!  
**Sundays @ 7PM**  
Contact Pastor Shea for login

# *In Our Thoughts and Prayers*

**SHUT-INS:**

Jim Baldwin            Sue Crouse  
Diane Bates            Bonnie Genrich  
Putt Crouse            Liz Miller

Gary Smith  
Millie Wetz

**LEADERS:**

Rev. Dean & Liz Pfeiffer  
Rev. Shea & Holly Pennington  
LCMS Synod & District  
Hope Staff & Ministries

Pres. Donald Trump  
Our Nation & World  
Our Armed Forces  
Our 1<sup>st</sup> Responders

## *Family and Friends of Hope*

**NEW REQUESTS:**

Douglas Brown	possible cancer; anticipating surgery
John Francis	father of Lou Ann Erdakos—hospitalized
Lattz family	mourning death of Wendell's brother, Lester
Mina Medhat's father	friend of Cindy Kemp—seriously ill
Nash family	mourning death of Mary Lou twin grandsons of Beverly Pirhonen—near blind; strengthening of eye muscles

**CURRENT REQUESTS:**

Kayra Cannell	niece of Alan & Sue Griffin—rare form of lupus
Mary Easton	sister of Georgia Shaw—COVID; blood transfusions
Ernie Edelman	COVID; recovering at home
Burt Hermann	pancreatic cancer; chemo
Stefanos family & friends	mourning death of Mark Stefanos
Warner family	mourning death of Joyce Warner
Grant Woods	friend of Dennis Walkenhorst—COVID coma

**BATTLING CANCER:**

	Debbie	Burt Hermann		
Austin Dobbs	Derek	Barry Himmel	Faye Mueller	Betty Snaper
Tom Battling	Ginnie Donaldson	Dale Jarvis	Ovie	Judy Strait
Laura Blake	Jace Driggers	Gordon Long	Lynn Reagin	Rev. Alan Struckmeyer
Bob Broshelle	Kori Dunke	Jean Marie Mactye	Fran Saitta	Jeannie Lee Taylor
Dave Cannell	Marcus Elam	Pat Mailloux	Becky Schlicher	Rick Ward
Mary Clapp	Tim Griffie	Mari	Mary Scott	Mr. Wells
Alice Correia	Jerry Gross	Pat Mason	Abbey Sedlacek	Millie Wetz
D	JoAnne Hayashi	Jennifer McCourt	Gary Smith	Heather Whitehurst

## *Serving in the Military* (R—Reserves)

Zachary Allen	Lorrie Daniell—R	Bobby Martin	Derek Quackenbush
Alex Almaguer	Stephanie Enloe—R	Aaron Morley	Justin Rappa
Jacob Bertsch	Joshua Gross	Tyler Newkirk	Ryan Sonnenberg
Matt Bracken	Brandon Hastings	Stephen Olliff—R	Caleb Strand
Stephen Daniell—R	Brad Landis	Blake Paton—R	Mike Szostkiewicz—R
		Donnie Pittman	

*Due to space limitation, prayer requests can only be listed for four weeks.*  
***Please email your prayer requests to [hopePCprays@gmail.com](mailto:hopePCprays@gmail.com).***



*"Think of us in this way as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries."*

1Corinthians 4:1

**SERVING OUR LORD THIS SUNDAY (12/13/2020) ARE:**

Health Professional	8:00/Joyce Van Matre; 10:30/Janet Reitzel
Lector	8:00/Jeff McClure; 10:30/Pat Bender
Elder on Duty	8:00/Wayne Warner; 10:30/Jim Drapp
Flowers	Howell family
Offerings	Alan & Sue Griffin
Ushers	Team 3

8:00/Lonnie Bertsch,\* Diane Bertsch, Tom Reagin;  
10:30/ Stuart Howell,\* Wendell Lattz, Andrew MacDonald, Ron MacDonald, Jack Moberg

*Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by  
Stuart & Sandy Howell in honor of Dawn's birthday*

**SERVING OUR LORD THIS WEDNESDAY (12/16/2020) ARE:**

Health Professional	4:30/OPEN; 6:30/Carol Walkenhorst
Elder on Duty	6:30/Todd Warner

**SERVING OUR LORD NEXT SUNDAY (12/20/2020) ARE:**

Health Professional	8:00/Julie Gates; 10:30/Todd Warner
Lector	8:00/Cindy Kemp; 10:30/Cathie Warner
Elder on Duty	8:00/Lonnie Bertsch; 10:30/Nick Trivunovich
Flowers	Tennyson family
Offerings	Wendell & Pam Lattz
Ushers	Team 1

8:00/Wayne Warner,\* David Booher, David Niver, Jeff Reaume;  
10:30/Todd Warner,\* Mack Goethe, Billy Mueller, Dora Mueller, Jim Szostkiewicz