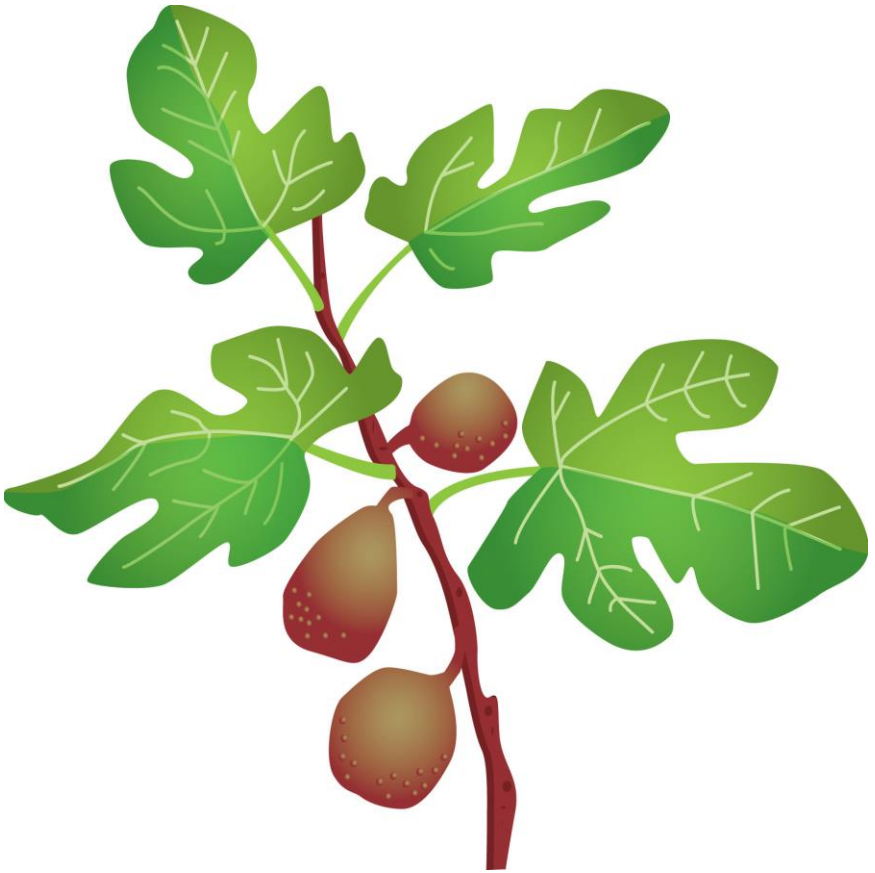


Tidings of Hope

October 2023



Hope Lutheran Church
Ladysmith, Wisconsin

Tidings of Hope

Information & Inspiration

October 2023

The Fig Tree

By Pastor Christopher Martin

“On the following day, when they came from Bethany, (Jesus) was hungry. And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And (Jesus) said to it, ‘May no one ever eat fruit from you again.’ And his disciples heard it.

And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And he was teaching them and saying to them, ‘Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But you have made it a den of robbers.’ And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy (Jesus), for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.” (Mark 11:12-18)

During his ministry, Martin Luther used an analogy to describe the role of good works in the life of the Christian. Luther once supposedly asked his students what was the purpose of an apple tree? The answer to which is obvious: it’s there to produce apples. That’s what a person should reasonably expect from an apple tree. Luther then said just like the apple tree’s purpose is to produce fruit, and specifically, apples, likewise, for the Christian, good works are the fruit of the Christian life. They’re not what get us to heaven, but make no mistake, God fully expects of His redeemed, forgiven people, fruit. It’s simply part of what makes us Christians!

As the Church, we have been commissioned by our Lord to be about one thing: Making Disciples. You've likely heard me say this so much in the now three years I've spent with you, that perhaps you might be tempted to tune me out and say "Yes, Pastor, we know this." Which is why I want to draw you to the Scripture lesson from Mark that I shared with you.

As you read verses 12-14, we see Jesus pass by a fig tree and he's looking for figs. At first glance, it might seem like an unreasonable expectation on the part of Jesus, because Mark almost sounds like he's making excuses for there not being fruit on the tree. However, on this particular type of fig tree, by the time the leaves start appearing on the trees, you should be able to see some early, unripe figs on that tree. This particular fig tree is lacking that. To the rest of the world, it looks like a fig tree, and thus, the expectation is to see that it will bear fruit. But despite outward appearances, the tree isn't doing what it's been created to do. And from this moment forward, Jesus says that tree will live out the remainder of its existence without bearing fruit. And we find later in Mark's gospel the tree's fate: it has withered away to its roots.

I asked this question in a Bible study recently, but it's worth asking all of you to think about as well: which is worse: to die, or to continue to live and not be fulfilling your purpose in your life?

I ask this because what is the purpose of the Church? The purpose of the church, the purpose of the Christian is to "Make disciples of all nations." How do we do this? We baptize and we teach everything in God's Word. Our focus is not on ourselves, it is not on an institution, or who gets to have power and control. It's about proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus in Word and Deed, one life at a time.

Throughout human history, we've seen how the Church gets distracted from this mission time and time again, and tends to drift into institutional survival, as opposed to being the living, active Body of Christ, seeking to proclaim His Word of life, forgiveness, and salvation to all. We witness this in the 2nd half of our reading from Mark 11, as we see how Jesus had to cleanse the temple of the money changers, and put a stop to what amounted to "religious tourism" by not allowing anyone to cut through the grounds anymore so that those who had come to worship would be able to

do so without the distractions of the outside world. Even though a lot of what was happening there seemed well intentioned or had seemingly religious purposes, they were drawing attention and focus away from the presence of God, and the presence of Jesus, God in human flesh, who was there at the temple to speak His life-giving Word. Thus, the need for reformation.

We see this again in the Reformation of the 16th century. When Martin Luther desired to call the church to return to the Scripture to find the message of the Gospel, it led him to call out some of the problems of the institutional church of his day. This of course led to sharp disagreement with those who wanted to hold onto positions of perceived power and authority. Yet, the Gospel was at stake. Luther did not stay silent as he called the church to return to the Word, which called us to be followers of Jesus Christ, who then made followers of Jesus Christ, not followers of a human institution.

Today, we must always remain on guard for this temptation in our church life as well. It's very easy, when we don't remain fully centered in Christ and His Word, to start to drift off track, and get focused on other things that do not offer life and salvation in the name of Jesus. If you have not already read it, I'd encourage you to read "Autopsy of a Deceased Church" by Thom Rainer to see what happens when churches lose their Christ-Centered focus, and drift into institutional survival.

As we move forward in faith, and soon celebrate the festival of the Reformation at the end of October, I want to challenge you to read Galatians 5:16-24. As you do, ask yourself which kind of fruit are you producing in your everyday life? What fruit is our congregation producing? Are we truly kingdom-focused, or are we set in simply maintaining an institution because it's what makes us comfortable? How are you personally participating in our mission of making disciples who are centered and deeply rooted in Christ and His Word? What needs to change in your life, or the life of our church, to make this happen and become our purpose for being here?

It is my prayer that as God's people, we freely confess our sins of thought, word, and deed, rejoice in the gift of forgiveness that is ours through the blood of the crucified and risen Jesus, and may we always be ready to engage in the true purpose of the church: go and make disciples!



CONFIRMATION



Briley Burmeister has completed Confirmation instruction and will affirm the faith of her baptism on Sunday, October 29 at 10:30am at Glen Flora Lutheran Church. Members of Hope are invited to the service to support Briley and the confirmands from Glen Flora Lutheran as they take this important step in their faith journey.

Path Forward Update

The Path Forward Committee of Hope Lutheran Church convened in late August after the last issue of the Tidings went to print. We have since had two meetings, with a third one scheduled for the last week of September. During these meetings, we began with a Bible Study led by Pastor Martin on Mark 11:12-19 and discussed the difference between a Kingdom-Focused church and an Institutional Focused mindset.

We then spent time beginning a “Mission-Driven Roadmap” for Hope Lutheran Church as we took time to specifically identify, and discuss, specific items of Hope’s current circumstances, including: strengths and assets we have as a congregation, problems that need to be addressed, and some threats that could get in the way of our future. We posted our initial list from our first meeting on a white board that was left out in the fellowship hall for the entire congregation to view for a two-week period. We then reconvened and had further conversation on these items at our next meeting.

As a result of this, we have already identified some potential opportunities for ministry focus that we will explore in the future. (This is not to say these will be the only ones.) We’ve also identified initial potential action items that we will be looking into further in the future. Stay tuned to the Tidings for future updates. If you have any questions about the progress of the Path Forward Committee, please contact Pastor Martin or Council President, Nick Sovacool.



Hope Lutheran Church Women



Monthly Meeting: The HLCW will hold their monthly meeting on Thursday, October 19 at 9:30am. Hostesses are Cindy Albus and Jackie Buchholz. All women of Hope are welcome.

Women's Gathering at GFLC: The Glen Flora Lutheran Church Women invite the women of Hope to a Fall Gathering on Tuesday, October 24 at 12:00noon at Glen Flora Lutheran Church. Please watch the Sunday bulletins for more information.

Quilting: The quilting group will meet on Tuesday, October 24 beginning at 9:00am. There are jobs for all skill levels. If you can stay the whole day, please bring a sack lunch. Quilt squares are also available to be sewn at home. Questions? Contact Karen Skeels (715-452-5444).



Adult Education & Fellowship Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: A new Bible study entitled "Fruit of the Spirit" will begin on Sunday, October 1 at 10:30am in the Fireside Room. This study will be led by Lindsay Martin. Everyone is welcome!

Book Discussion: The book discussion group will meet on Sunday, October 15 at 10:30am. The book for October is Kidnapped in Haiti by Katrina Hoover Lee.

Meal of the Month: This month's Meal of the Month will be held at the Main Street Café in Bloomer on Wednesday, October 4 at 11:30am. If you would like to carpool, please meet in the church parking lot by 10:25am.

Clergy Appreciation Month

October is Clergy Appreciation Month (October 8 is Clergy Appreciation Day). We wish to thank Pastor Martin for his dedicated service to Hope Lutheran Church. We also thank Lindsay, Bradon, Zachary, and Cassie for the sacrifices they make that allow him to serve Hope Lutheran Church as our pastor.

“Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.” ~ Hebrews 13:7 (NLT)

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Faithful Participants in God’s Mission

We are to be generous and ready to share.

These words are from the Apostle Paul in his letter to his brother in the faith, Timothy. Paul writes, “They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.” (1 Timothy 6:18)

Giving is an important part of the Christian life. When God’s people give of their time, talent, and treasure, they mirror the nature of God. One of the primary purposes of our giving is to fund the mission of the church at home and beyond—to reach others with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because God has chosen to use us as His tools to bring salvation to all people, we must use our lives and money to spread the Good News. The funding of the Great Commission needs to come from believers. The money which God entrusts to us has many purposes, and the funding of mission work is of first importance. Through the giving of our treasure, we are demonstrating our willingness to be Faithful Participants in God’s Mission, both here at Hope Lutheran Church and around the world.





FOOD PANTRY

The Hope Lutheran Food Pantry serves those in need throughout Rusk County. The Pantry is open Mondays 1:00-3:00pm, and Fridays 9:30-11:30am.

Volunteers are also needed the first and third Mondays of each month (October 2 & 16) to help unload the Feed My People delivery and to stock shelves. If you can help out, please be to the church by 9:15am.

Donations of non-perishable food items can be brought to the church during office hours or on Sunday mornings. Monetary donations can be sent to the church office or placed in the offering plate (clearly marked "Food Pantry").

MANNA Meal

This month's MANNA Meal will be served on Thursday, October 26 from 5:00-6:00pm. This is a free meal providing both food and fellowship to those in need. This month's meal is sponsored by Faith United Methodist Church.

Operation Christmas Child

We will once again be preparing "shoeboxes" for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. If you would like to pack a box, there are some available in the narthex. For a list of suggested items to pack, visit <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child>. There is also a basket in the narthex if you would like to donate items for boxes that will be packed by the church. Monetary donations to help cover shipping costs are also appreciated. The cost for shipping is \$10/box.

Mission Statement

Hope Lutheran Church is commissioned to make disciples, commanded to love God and others, and committed to serve.



October Donuts & Devotions and OCC Shop-a-Thon: On Sunday, October 15 youth will meet for Donuts & Devotions following the worship service and then it's time for an Operation Christmas Child Shop-a-Thon at Wal-Mart and Dollar General in Ladysmith to purchase items for the OCC shoeboxes.

November Donuts & Devotions: Youth will meet for Donuts & Devotions on Sunday, November 5 following the worship service

November Pizza Party and OCC Assembly: On Sunday, November 5 at 5:00pm youth will meet in the fellowship hall to assemble Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes and enjoy some pizza!

December Donuts & Devotions: Youth will meet for Donuts & Devotions following the worship service on Sunday, December 3.

Please check the bulletin board for updates and sign-ups, and as always, friends are welcome at any of these events!

Sunday School

Sunday School is held each Sunday from 10:15-11:00am. Sunday School is for children 3-years old through 6th grade. All children are welcome! A registration form can be found on the education bulletin board, in the church office, or on the church's website (hlcladysmith.org). Please contact Heidi Jo Sovacool if you have questions.

Wednesday School

Wednesday School meets each Wednesday from 3:30-4:45pm. This is for students in PK-6th grades. Elementary students can ride Bus 9 from LES to the church but will need a bus pass signed by a parent or guardian. A registration form can be found on the education bulletin board, in the church office, or on the church's website (hlcladysmith.org).

HLCW 3rd ANNUAL FALL DINNER

Wednesday, October 18 with serving from 4:30-6:30pm
Adults - \$12; Children (10 yrs old & younger) - \$6
Preschool and younger eat free
Carry-outs - \$13

MENU

Meatloaf, Baked Potatoes,
Vegetable, Rolls, and Dessert



Winter Clothing Drive

The Service & Fellowship Committee is sponsoring a Winter Clothing Drive now through November 26. Donations of new and clean, gently used coats, jackets, snowpants, etc. Monetary donations (made payable to Hope Lutheran Church and marked "Winter Clothing Drive") will also be accepted to purchase needed items. Items can be placed in the basket in the narthex. Items collected will be distributed to community members in need. If you have questions, please contact a member of the Service & Fellowship Committee (Heidi Zielke, Sherry Hemm, Jim Spielman).

Bake Sale

A bake sale will be held on Sunday, October 29 with proceeds going towards purchasing t-shirts for members of Hope to wear when serving at public events (Mardi Gras parade, Farmers Market booth, Walk for Life, etc). If you are willing to bake for this event, please contact a member of the Service & Fellowship Committee (Heidi Zielke, Sherry Hemm, Jim Spielman).

GriefShare

The third series of Hope Lutheran's GriefShare support group began in September. A nice feature of the program is that even though it is a 13-week cycle, each session is self-contained so people do not have to attend in sequence, so it's never too late to join.

GriefShare is a faith-based, non-denominational grief support group that is led by trained lay leaders. Each participant receives a workbook containing weekly activities. The 90-minute session consists of a 15-20 minute discussion of the workbook exercises, a 40-minute DVD presentation by experts in the field of grief, and 25-30 minutes to discuss the DVD topics.

If you, or someone you know, would like to register for the program, please call the Hope Lutheran office at 715-532-7739 and leave your contact information. A GriefShare leader will call back. You can also register online at griefshare.org, just click on "Find a group" and enter the 54848 zip code.

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who helped in any way with the Hope Lutheran booth at the Ladysmith Farmers Market this summer. Whether you baked, provided craft items or produce, worked at the booth, or helped in any way, we couldn't have done it without you!

Scrip Program

Scrip cards are sold following worship most Sundays. Scrip cards are currently available for a number of local businesses, as well as Amazon. Scrip cards can also be ordered from a list of other businesses (special orders must be paid for in advance). Through the scrip program you receive the full value of the cards and a percentage of every card sold is returned to the church as a charitable contribution. Proceeds from the Scrip program go towards building and maintenance needs. Please stop by the table in the multi-purpose room following worship to purchase cards or for more information.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTION

SEPTEMBER 2023

Congregational Care & Outreach: The last Farmers Market booth will be September 30. GriefShare began on September 13. **Next Meeting:** October 4 at 3:00pm.

Parish Education: Children's Christmas Program is tentatively scheduled for December 17. Wednesday School to begin September 20. **Next Meeting:** October 11 at 6:30pm.

Property: Guy Waller will refinish basement wall. Received an estimate for boiler replacement of \$100,000-120,00. Boiler should be okay for a few more years. Soffit repair has been postponed. **Next meeting:** October 10 at 6:00pm.

Service & Fellowship: There will be a bake sale on October 29 with money used to pay for Mardi Gras parade supplies and t-shirts for parade walkers and other events (Walk for Life, Farmers Market, etc). A winter apparel clothing drive will take place until November 26. **Next Meeting:** October 12 at 9:30am.

Social Ministries: Mission and Benevolence funds were designated for the Walk for Life and Faith Comes by Hearing. **Next meeting:** TBA.

Stewardship & Finance: Two scholarships for the fall 2023 semester were awarded to Rachel Sovacool and Nicholas Sovacool who are both attending Bethany Lutheran Collge. **Next meeting:** October 10 at 5:30pm.

Worship & Music: Video equipment will be installed October 23-27 with training for volunteers on the 27th. Will do a Thanksgiving themed worship service on November 19. **Next meeting:** November 7 at 6:00pm.

Youth Ministry: A total of \$1,269.64 was raised to purchase supplies for flood buckets with 54 buckets being completed. There will be an NALC Youth Gathering in Texas July 1-4, 2024. **Next meeting:** October 4 at 6:30pm.

Next Meeting: October 17 at 6:30pm.



Deadlines...

Items for the weekly bulletin are due in the church office no later than noon on Wednesday. Items for the November newsletter are due in the church office by October 17.

The preferred method of submission is via email (hlcladysmith@gmail.com) or electronic file. Items may also be left in the office mailbox or dropped off at the office during office hours.

Change of Address and/or Phone Number?

If you have had a change in address or phone number, please notify the church office of these changes. Also, in an effort to improve communication we are seeking email addresses for members of the congregation. If you would like to have your email address added to the list, please send it to the church office at hlcladysmith@gmail.com.

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor	Rev. Christopher Martin
Church Secretary	Bonnie Billings
Custodian	Rosemary Warwick
Organists	Lisa Borman Karen Tappon Terry Wedwick

Hope Lutheran Church
320 First St. S.
P.O. Box 184
Ladysmith, WI 54848
Church Phone: 715-532-7739
E-Mail Address: hlcladysmith@gmail.com
Website: hlcladysmith.org



October Worship Assistants

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | Ushers
Lector
Comm. Asst.
Acolyte | Dave Borman, Irene Titera
Jana Nyhagen
Irene Titera
Nolan Kammerud |
| 8 | Ushers
Lector
Comm. Asst.
Acolyte | Jerry & Pat McEathron
Irene Titera
Bradon Martin
Briley Burmesiter |
| 15 | Ushers
Lector
Comm. Asst.
Acolyte | Kathy Ducommun, Kathy Peterson
Charlie Holtebeck
Chris Holtebeck
Violet Craker |
| 22 | Ushers
Lector
Comm. Asst.
Acolyte | Kathy Ducommun, Charlie Holtebeck
Bonnie Billings
Chris Holtebeck
Tanner Davis |
| 29 | Ushers
Lector
Comm. Asst.
Acolytes | Dave Borman, Nick Sovacool
Nick Sovacool
Bradon Martin
Bradon Martin, Sophia Kammerud,
Nolan Kammerud |

Prayer Concerns

If you have asked to have someone listed in the prayer concerns in the Sunday bulletins, please contact the church office (715-532-7739 or hlcladysmith@gmail.com) with periodic updates so that we can keep the list current. If we do not receive an update, the person will be removed from the list after one month.



OCTOBER

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|---|
| 1 | Della Goffin
Jeff Johnson
Tiffany Johnson
Brinley Solsrud | 15 | Michelle Brooks
Owen Burmeister
Donna Weber |
| 2 | Diane Cumming
Sean Lund
Scott Peterson | 16 | Lisa Borman
Kaylyn Wimer |
| 3 | Dalton Wiemer | 17 | Mark Bentley, Jr.
James Meyers |
| 4 | Aiden Hoyt
Rachel Sovacool
Trent Vollendorf | 18 | Alex Effertz
McKenzie Konichek
Jenna Lent
Chris Martin |
| 5 | Tracy Verdegan | 19 | Camryn Closs |
| 6 | Jill Buchholz | 20 | Pat Grunseth
Mason Mautner
Berndt Soviak |
| 7 | Olivia Bitner
Asialena Trindal | 21 | Blake Nyhagen
Eliana Shultz |
| 8 | David Hraban
George Lawrence | 22 | Erin Molstad
Shannon Wester |
| 9 | Julie vanDoorn | 23 | Dan Morgan |
| 10 | Doris Marten
Pam Polak
Jade vanDoorn | 24 | Kim Davis
Diane Meuli |
| 11 | Erle Barber | 25 | Alan Larson |
| 13 | Terry Carlino
Bishop Peterson | 26 | Ann Wiley |
| 14 | Gina Cooley | 28 | John Kenyon |
| | | 31 | Leah Kimber |

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|-----------|--|-----------|---|
| 3 | Brandyn & Jessie Polak | 15 | Mark & Jill Berg |
| 4 | Bob & Pat Grunseth | 16 | Alan & Lisa Larson |
| 7 | Christian & Kelsey Borman
Kelsey & Blayne Field | 21 | Kyle & Erin Craker
Bob & Jessica Hoehn |
| 8 | Jim & Kathy Stanton | 27 | James & Barbara Stanton |
| 10 | Carla & Mike Closs | 29 | Chris & Lindsay Martin |
| 12 | Todd & Jenny Dahlstrom | 31 | Bill & Sharon Kaul |