

Tidings of Hope

February 2024



Hope Lutheran Church
Ladysmith, Wisconsin

Tidings of Hope

Information & Inspiration
February 2024

Return to the Lord Your God

By Pastor Christopher Martin

Soon, we will begin the season of Lent. During Lent, in our Sunday liturgy, we say farewell to Alleluia, and instead, as our Gospel acclamation, we sing these words from Joel 2:13: “Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.”

That’s not a message we hear in the world in which we live, is it? We live with one of two extremes: we are often told there is no such thing as sin, we are free to live however we wish and do whatever we want, just as long as you’re not hurting anybody else, or we’re told that we’re not worthy of God’s love and grace, not after the things that we have said or done.

Friends, the reality is, both of these lies come to us from the lips of Satan. And we live with both of these lies being told to us, personally, almost every day of our lives. We’re led to fall into temptation to sin, believing that our case is acceptable for whatever reason we can come up with. But then, as soon as we fall, we feel the guilt. We feel the shame. It keeps us awake at night, wondering if we can ever possibly be forgiven for how we have failed others, or how we have failed God.

The truth is, each and every one of us live with this battle every single day of our lives. We may try to distract ourselves from it. We may try to explain it away in one way or another, or try to make it acceptable for ourselves or our loved ones. But make no mistake, deep down within our souls, we know we have failed God, we have failed others, and live as spiritual exiles.

That's why, during this season of the church year, we spend time at the foot of the cross of Jesus. We watch everything that Jesus says and does in our place. And that's why it is so important for us not to run as far away as we can get from Jesus, but to draw near to Him and to His cross. Thus, the call from the prophet Joel: return to the Lord your God. In Jesus Christ, God is gracious and merciful, because the blood of Jesus has covered every single last one of your sins. You have a God in Jesus Christ who desires to drown your old sinful nature and put it to death, so that you can be raised up to live a new life as a new creation in Christ!

Dear friends, I want to encourage you during this Lenten season to take a spiritual journey with me. I want you to make the time to make Sunday morning worship a part of your weekly routine, not because you have to, but because this is where Jesus is present to feed your soul with the spiritual food you need to live in Him in this world. I also encourage you to do two other things this year: first our church body, the North American Lutheran Church, will soon be releasing its Lenten devotions for 2024, featuring writings by not just our continental staff members, but other pastors across the church. I encourage you to make use of this resource each day once its released. I also encourage you to join us as we come together with our brothers and sisters in Christ at Glen Flora Lutheran Church for our midweek Lenten services on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m., preceded by a soup supper each week. We will worship together as a parish family on February 21, March 6, and March 20 at Hope, and on February 28 and March 13 at Glen Flora. I encourage you to attend each week's service, regardless of if it is at "your" church, so that we may come together to journey with our Lord to His cross and empty tomb together.

Finally, I encourage you each day to reflect on your need of a Savior in Jesus, give thanks that He has forgiven you all of your sins, and to live in His grace, forgiveness, and life, so that others see through you the difference that being a follower of Jesus makes in our lives today.

"Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes."

Daniel 9:3



Ash Wednesday & Lenten Worship

Ash Wednesday is February 14. A worship service with Holy Communion and imposition of ashes will be held at 6:30pm that day. We hope you can join us as we begin the journey through the season of Lent.

Mid-week Lenten worship services will be held each Wednesday in the month of March at 6:30pm. The services on February 21 and March 6 & 20 will be held here at Hope Lutheran. We will meet together at Glen Flora Lutheran Church on February 28 and March 13. Soup suppers will be held prior to the services.

Education & Fellowship Opportunities

Book Discussion: The book discussion group will meet on Sunday, February 18 at 10:20am in the Fireside Room. The book for February is Someone Like You by Karen Kingsbury. Eight large print copies and one audio book have been reserved at the Rusk County Community Library.

Sunday Morning Study: The Sunday morning “Fruit of the Spirit” Bible study will meet on Sundays, February 4, 11 & 25 at 10:30am in the Fireside Room.

Meal of the Month: The February Meal of the Month will be on Wednesday, February 14 at 11:30am at Grandpa’s Pizza. This monthly gathering is an opportunity for members of the congregation to enjoy a meal and time of fellowship while supporting one of our local businesses.

Devoted to Prayer

The NALC daily prayer and Bible reading calendar can be found in this newsletter or online at <https://thenalc.org/worship-resources/devoted-to-prayer-introduction/>.



The fourth GriefShare grief support cycle will begin on Thursday, March 7. GriefShare is a network of 15,000 churches worldwide equipped to offer 13-week non-denominational, faith-based, grief support groups to help people deal with all of the complex feelings after the death of a loved one.

The lay people leading the classes have experienced grief themselves and have gone through special training. 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. They can pick up any sessions they missed in the next cycle. Each participant receives a free workbook with activities that can be completed during the week.

Each 90-minute session consists of a 10–15 minute check-in time to discuss the previous week and/or workbook topics, a 30-40 minute DVD presentation by experts in the field of grief, and 25-30 minutes to discuss the DVD topics.

The Hope Lutheran GriefShare sessions will run from 6:00-7:30pm on Thursdays, March 7, 14, and 21 during Lent, and Wednesdays, beginning March 27 through the end of May, except for April 17, which will be re-scheduled for Thursday, April 18.

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

Please keep the facilitators and participants in your prayers as they walk together through the grief journey towards healing.

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"Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning."
Psalm 30:5



Hope Lutheran Church Women

February Meeting: The HLCW will hold their monthly meeting on Thursday, February 15 at 9:30am. All Women of Hope are welcome to attend. Hostesses are Lisa Borman and Chris Holtebeck.

January Meeting Notes: Lisa Borman and Jackie Buchholz agreed to deliver the items from the sock and underwear tree to our local schools. Thank you for all the donations. Dee Peterson agreed to take over the decorating for HLCW. We discussed Lenten soup suppers, the first of which will be held on Wednesday, February 21.

Quilting: The quilting group will meet on Tuesday, February 27 beginning at 9:00am. There are jobs for all skill levels. If you can stay for 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).

Youth Ministry

Christie Mountain Ski Day: Hope Lutheran Youth Ministry is hosting a day at Christie Mountain Ski Area on Sunday, February 11 following worship. Lunch will be provided. Registration forms are available on the Youth Ministry bulletin board, the church's website (hlcladysmith.org) or in the church office. Registration forms are due by Friday, February 9. If you have questions, please contact Julie Kammerud (juliekammerud@gmail.com).

Donuts & Devotions: Youth in grades 6-12 are invited for donuts and devotions on Sunday February 25 and March 3 at 10:15am.

Friends are always welcome at all Youth Ministry events!

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“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

1 Timothy 4:12 (ESV)

Livestreaming

Our Sunday morning worship services are livestreamed on the Hope Lutheran Church YouTube channel each Sunday and posted to the church's Facebook page. If you would like to sponsor a worship service in honor or memory of a loved one, there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex. The suggested donation is \$50/service. Proceeds from the livestream sponsorships are used to keep the technology needed for this ministry up-to-date.

Scrip

Scrip cards are sold following the worship service most Sundays. Scrip cards are available for several area businesses and can be ordered from a long list of other vendors. Proceeds from the scrip program are used for building and maintenance needs. Please stop by the table in the multi-purpose room to purchase scrip or for more information.





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 needed on the first and third Mondays of each month (February 5 & 19) at 9:15am to help unload the Feed My People delivery and to stock shelves.

Donations of non-perishable food items can be dropped off at the church on Sunday mornings or during the week during office hours. Monetary donations can be placed in the offering plate or dropped off at the church office (clearly mark donation for the food pantry).

MANNA Meal

(Meals Available for the Nutritional Needs of All)

This month's MANNA Meal will be held on Thursday, February 29 with serving from 5:00-6:00pm. This is a free meal providing food and fellowship to those in need of either. This month's meal is being served by members of Hope Lutheran.

Hope & Friends Backpack Food Program

The Backpack Food Program is in its ninth year of serving children through the Ladysmith Elementary and Middle Schools. We have also added some students involved with the Power House Youth Center. The number of students served has increased from 80 students in the 2022-23 school year to over 130 in the current school year.

This program is only possible through the generosity of many in our congregation and community who give of their time and monetary support. Monetary donations can be placed in the offering plate (using the special envelopes in the pews) or dropped off in the church office (clearly marked for the Backpack Food Program).

Summary of Council & Committee Action

Path Forward Update: Committee has been meeting and are getting close to presenting a recommendation.

2024 Budget: Brian Buchholz presented the proposed 2024 budget to the Council. Council approved the budget to be presented at the annual meeting.

Congregational Care & Outreach: The next GriefShare series begins on March 7. The Marriage Enrichment Group is beginning a "Love & Respect" video study. Next meeting: February 6 at 3:30pm.

Parish Education: Did not meet prior to Council meeting. Next meeting: TBA.

Property: The soffit project is 90% complete with the remainder to be finished in the spring. Repairs to the wall in the fellowship hall are complete. Discussed maintenance needs and projects for 2024. Next meeting: TBA.

Service & Fellowship: No report submitted. Next meeting: TBA.

Social Ministries: Food pantry is in need of donations and services may need to be scaled back. Benevolence and Missions funds were designated for CareNet, Rusk Co. Lifesavers, Salvation Army, and Lutheran Bible Translators. Next meeting: TBA.

Stewardship & Finance: Spent time working on the budget and a new deposit slip. Next meeting: February 6 at 5:30pm.

Worship & Music: Continuing to tweak the livestreaming. Lenten worship begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. Discussed Christmas Eve worship and the possibility of going to just one service. Easter is March 31. Next meeting: February 6 at 6:30pm.

Youth Ministry: Made plans for 2024. Christie Mt. Ski Day will be in February. Next meeting: February 7 at 6:30pm.

Next Council Meeting: February 20 at 6:30pm.



Deadlines...

Items for the weekly bulletin are due in the church office no later than noon on Wednesday. Items for the March newsletter are due in the church office by Thursday, February 15.

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 your mailing address, email 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	Christopher Martin
Church Secretary	Bonnie Billings
Custodian	Rosemary Warwick
Organists	Lisa Borman Karen Tappon Terry Wedwick

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WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

4	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Dave Borman, Gordie Dukerschein Jana Nyhagen Irene Titera Violet Craker
11	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Gordie Dukerschein, Charlie Holtebeck Gordie Dukerschein Chris Holtebeck Addison Hulle
14 Ash Weds	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Nick Sovacool, Aileen Tauchen Jana Nyhagen Bradon Martin Bradon Martin
18	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Kathy Peterson, Irene Titera Irene Titera Gordie Dukerschein Nolan Kammerud
21 Weds	Ushers Lector Acolyte	Nick Sovacool, Aileen Tauchen Aileen Tauchen Violet Craker
25	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Gordie Dukerschein, Charlie Holtebeck Charlie Holtebeck Bev Dukerschein Addison Hulle

Mission Statement

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