

Tidings of Hope

September 2021



Hope Lutheran Church
Ladysmith, Wisconsin

Tidings of Hope

Information & Inspiration

September 2021

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”

Exodus 20:8 ESV

By Pastor Christopher Martin

As many of you know, in addition to serving as your Pastor, I also serve as co-chairman of the Renewal Team in the Missions office of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). In that capacity, I've had the opportunity to have conversations with pastors and leaders of other small and rural congregations across our church body about the challenges they face, and the opportunities they have to renew the ministries of their congregations. While each congregation faces its own struggles and challenges that are unique to their situation, one common challenge that is affecting churches across the NALC (Hope and Glen Flora included) has been the fact that we have witnessed a decline in our average worship attendance that has been very slow to recover to pre-pandemic levels. This decline due to the pandemic has in many cases accelerated what was already a trend in many congregations of all denominations across the board for the last several decades.

As I pondered the answer to the question of how do we reverse this trend, Rev. David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism in the NALC, addressed this very issue in his “Ministry Matters” article that appeared in the July edition of the NALC News titled “One More”. I have chosen to share the article in its entirety with you because he does an excellent job in laying the issue before us, and offering us a challenge and yes, even hope. I'll offer my own comments briefly after the article:

“As I was preparing one of my reports for the 2021 NALC Mission Convocation, I shared some information related to the current reality of our congregations. As we are aware that many

(Pastor's column, cont.)

congregations in North America are declining in worship attendance, it is interesting to note that one statistic has provided some clarity with regard to this decline. As some of our pastors and congregations may not read the staff reports for convocation, it seems worth noting that statistic here.

According to Sam Ranier, founder and CEO of *Church Answers*, in 2018, the median size of all congregations in the United States was 75 people, while most congregations are less than 100 average worshiping attendance. At the same time, the median age of church members was 73 years old. He points out in a separate research study that much of the attendance decline is the result of a drop in *frequency* of worship attendance. A congregation may have the same number of participants, but they are worshiping less frequently, which lowers the average worship attendance.

Ranier writes: *Simply stated, the number one reason for the decline in church attendance is that members attend with less frequency than they did just a few years ago. Allow me to explain. When membership becomes truly meaningful, our churches will become an unstoppable force for the Kingdom and glory of God. If the frequency of attendance changes, then attendance will respond accordingly. For example, if 200 members attend every week, the average attendance is, obviously, 200. But if one-half of those members miss only one out of four weeks, the attendance drops to 175.*

Did you catch that? No members left the church. Everyone is still relatively active in the church. But attendance declined over 12 percent because half the members changed their attendance behavior slightly. This phenomenon can take place rather quickly in an individual church. And leaders in the church are often left scratching their heads because the behavioral change is so slight, almost imperceptible. We really don't notice when someone who attends four times a month begins to attend only three times a month. Nor do we typically catch it when the twice-a-month attendee becomes a once-a-month attendee.

This is an insight that most of us have missed. We see worship attendance decline over time and assume it is loss of members. Sure, some congregations are losing members, but Ranier's

research indicates that “the number one reason for the decline in church attendance is that members attend with less frequency than they did just a few years ago.”

The good news in this statistic is that to reverse the trend and perhaps increase worship attendance, we need no exciting, high-powered evangelism strategy, no marketing campaign, and no influx of new members. Indeed, to increase congregational worship attendance, it takes only members making a commitment to attend worship *one more* Sunday than usual! If you attend only once a month, make a commitment to worship twice a month. If you are worshiping twice a month, make a commitment to worship three times a month.

And what impact does increasing worship attendance make in a congregation? Why will it matter?

1. Increasing, rather than declining, worship attendance generates excitement, a positive attitude, and hope for the future.
2. Increasing worship attendance uplifts and encourages pastors and will, over time, improve preaching.
3. While we may wish it were not the case, many members still give financially only when they attend worship. Increasing worship attendance always increases giving.
4. Weekly worship attendance, like so many aspects of faith, is a helpful spiritual habit. The more regular we are in worship, the more we develop the habit of weekly worship.
5. We are being obedient to God’s Word, where we are admonished, “Don’t stop meeting together with other believers, which some people have gotten into the habit of doing.” (Hebrews 10:25 CEB)
6. Increased personal worship attendance encourages greater participation in other areas of faith, discipleship, and service. Involvement begets involvement! The more we are present and involved, the more we will want to be involved.
7. We are following our Lord and His example when we worship regularly. Scripture tells us that Jesus “went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom.” (Luke 4:16, NRSV)

In our NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship Initiative, all disciples are urged to develop a life plan—acknowledging our current reality and

setting goals for faith, priorities, health, family, friends, finances, and service. Clearly, one important goal might to be attend worship *one more time* at least, each month, than is your current practice.

Setting such a goal may be especially helpful as many have gotten out of the habit of regular, in-person worship during the pandemic. Sam Ranier estimates worship attendance post-COVID-19 will be 20 percent lower than before the pandemic. Getting back to worship will take intentionality on the part of all of us. And it will benefit you, your pastor, and your congregation!

And what if you are worshipping every Sunday already? Then make a commitment, perhaps, to bring *one more* person to worship with you! Bring an elderly member who no longer drives to worship with you. Bring a grandchild, neighbor, or friend with you to worship. Invite someone new to join your congregation in worship. This is at the heart of Life-to-Life Discipleship! Maybe “*One More!*” can be a new theme for NALC congregations as we choose not to accept decline in the church, but choose, instead, resurrection and renewal!”

After reading Pastor Wendel’s article, I want to challenge every member of Hope Lutheran Church as we enter the fall programming season: if you are someone who has been a once or twice a month worshipper, commit to joining us for one more Sunday each month! If you’ve gotten out of the habit of coming to worship at Hope altogether, I want to personally encourage you to come back and worship with us at Hope at least one Sunday each month. Your presence with us in worship will be a tremendous encouragement to me as your pastor, but more importantly, to your fellow members of the congregation! If you are someone who is already here every Sunday, think about someone in your family, your circle of friends, at work, school, or someone else who you might bring with you to join us for worship at Hope Lutheran Church. Can you imagine what kind of renewal and excitement could happen in the life of Hope Lutheran Church if “*One More*” might be something we put into practice in the months to come?

I truly believe the Holy Spirit has been on the move in our midst since my arrival and that He has big things planned for us. This is a wonderful, simple way for us to start to venture into a future of hope, renewal, and new life in following Jesus Christ! I look forward to seeing you at church!



Hope Lutheran Church Women



Monthly Meeting: The HLCW will hold their monthly meeting on Thursday, September 16 at 9:30am. All women of Hope are welcome.

School Kits: The HLCW is collecting school supplies to fill backpacks. They currently have 12 backpacks, as well as crayons, pens, pencils and erasers. Each backpack needs 4 notebooks, 4 pocket folders, 1 blunt scissors, 1 ruler, and 1 pencil sharpener. Supplies can be placed in the basket in the narthex.

Quilting: The quilting group will meet in the fellowship hall on Tuesday, September 28 beginning at 9:00am. 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).

Adult Education & Fellowship Opportunities

Bible Study: The Sunday morning Bible study will meet on Sundays September 5, 12 & 26 beginning at 10:20am.

Women's Bible Study: This study group will meet on Friday, September 10 at 3:30pm.

Men's Breakfast: Men of Hope are invited to attend the Men's Breakfast & Bible Study held each Thursday at 7:00am at the Ladysmith Family Restaurant. The group studies the scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday and enjoys breakfast and fellowship.

Book Discussion: The Book Discussion Group will NOT meet in September.

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ." ~ Colossians 3:23-24.

Music Notes

The Choirchimes will resume on September 8 at 5:30pm. The Choir will resume on September 12 with rehearsal following the 9:00am worship service. If you have questions about either the Choir or Choirchimes, please contact Heidi Jo Sovacool.

Youth Ministry

High School Youth Breakfast: High School Youth will meet for breakfast and devotions on Sunday, September 19 following the 9:00am worship service. Youth should meet in the multi-purpose room following the service and the group will head out to the restaurant from there. The cost of the meal will be covered by Youth Ministry.

Movie Night: Middle & High School aged youth are invited to a movie night on September 26. Please watch upcoming Sunday bulletins and the Youth Ministry Facebook page for more information.

Addresses Wanted

We like to keep in touch with the young adults of our congregation who are attending college or technical school. Please submit college addresses to the church office (hlcladysmith@gmail.com or 715-532-7739).

Operation Christmas Child

We will once again be preparing “shoeboxes” for Samaritan’s Purse Operation Christmas Child. Now is the time to pick up and donate school supplies for children around the world who may not have anything for school. Items like pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, pencil pouches, crayons, blunt-tip scissors, colored pencils, glue sticks (NO liquid bottles please), spiral notebooks, other paper, and post-it notes are now on sale. Make it a fun shopping trip with your children or grandchildren and then deposit your donations in the basket in the narthex. Our boxes won’t be sent out until November but now is the time to get some good deals on school supplies! If you have questions, please contact Don Bartig (715-532-3303).

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. The Pantry will be closed on Monday, September 6 but will be open on Wednesday, September 8 from 1:00-3:00pm.

Volunteers are needed to work on pantry days. If you are interested in volunteering or have questions, please contact Josi Hamilton (715-532-6052). Volunteers are also needed on Wednesday, September 8 and Monday, September 20 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").

CareNet Walk for Life

CareNet Pregnancy Resource Center will hold their annual Walk for Life fundraiser on Saturday, September 18. The theme for this year's Walk is "He Delights in You". Registration will begin at 8:30am. If you would like to walk with the team from Hope, please pick up a registration form on the table in the narthex or contact Rosemary Johnson. If you are unable to walk but would like to pledge our walkers, please contact Rosemary Johnson or Linda Reissner.

Scrip Program

Scrip cards are sold following worship each Sunday. Scrip cards are currently available for Ladysmith Fresh Market, DQ, Walmart, Kwik Trip, Holiday, Subway, and McDonald's. Cards can also be ordered from an extensive list of other retailers, including Amazon. Proceeds from the Scrip program go towards building and maintenance needs. Please stop by the table in the multi-purpose room following worship for more information.

Fall Women's Retreat

Women of Hope are invited to join women from across the NALC September 24-26 at Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, WI for a weekend focused on discovering and understanding God's plan for our lives. The theme for this retreat is "Praising God from Sunrise to Sunset." Rev. Dr. Jody Becker will be the retreat speaker and devotion leader. Registration forms are available in the church office. Please contact Rosemary Johnson if you have questions

Thank You to Gary Bendixen!

Hope Lutheran Church would like to thank Gary Bendixen for his four years of service to Hope Lutheran Church as our Maintenance person. Gary submitted his resignation during the month of August. The Church Council and the Property Committee are currently in the process of reviewing and updating the Maintenance job description before we seek a replacement. Please stay tuned to our newsletter, bulletin, website, and Facebook pages for updates.

Thank You!

Dear Hope Prayer Team & Friends,

Because I have had two CT scans clear of cancer, I am thanking all of you for your continued prayers for me. I remain under monthly oncology checks and remain on chemo pills & Ibrance in case there are cells elsewhere wanting to take up residence somewhere. Thankful & awed by God's mercy & graciousness to me & your prayers, cards, & caring gifts & concern. God bless each of you! His peace go with you.

Pat McEathron

* * * * *

Thank you to my Hope family for all of your prayers, cards, and meals following my recent surgery. I have been recovering more quickly than anyone expected! Brad and I are so thankful for your prayers, love, and concern.

Bonnie Billings

Backpack Food Program

The 2020-21 school year was a challenging one but the Hope & Friends Backpack Food Program continued through the entire school year, helping students who were food insecure. More than 100 students were served last school year.

The program will begin its seventh year this fall at LES and LMS, serving students in Pre-K thru 8th grade. We are also hoping to expand our program to high school students through the Power House Youth Center. The purpose of the program is to provide better nutrition on the weekends when school lunches are unavailable. The hope is that better weekend nutrition will provide a better learning experience during the school week.

Children are supplied with two 2-4-ounce cereals, two entrees, a fruit, a vegetable, soup and some snacks (granola bars, crackers and even some treats) for weekends when school meals are not provided. Extended vacation times may also include jars of peanut butter and jelly and coupons for a half gallon of milk, a dozen eggs and a loaf of bread. Kwik Trip and Feed My People have been great supporters of the coupon program.

Students in the high school special education program partner with us and do all the packaging of the food packs. Volunteers also assist with the packaging and handle distribution of the food packs to students.

Hope & Friends Backpack Food Program is sponsored by Hope Lutheran Church in order to qualify to purchase discounted foods through Feed My People Food Bank in Eau Claire, the same organization that provides food to our food pantry. All funding is provided through local donations from churches, civic organizations and many individuals. There is no cost to families or the school district.

While Covid-19 has caused fundraising challenges, the all-volunteer organization has already begun fundraising for the 2021-22 school year. Individuals or organizations who would like to support the program can contribute by using the manila envelopes in the pews or send contributions to: Hope & Friends Backpack Food Program, P.O. Box 184, Ladysmith, Wisconsin 54848. All donations are tax deductible.



Back to Church Sunday Rally Day

We'll be kicking off our fall programming with a Rally Day celebration on National Back to Church Sunday, September 19. We invite you to join us for worship at 9:00am. Following the service there will be games on the lawn, food and a time of fellowship.

It takes many hands to make an event possible. Volunteers will be needed on Rally Day to help set up and take down tables and chairs. Volunteers will also be needed to help set up food and to clean up. Please contact Rosemary Johnson (715-532-6868) if you will be willing and available to help.

Sunday School

Sunday School classes will resume meeting on Sunday, September 26 beginning at 10:30am in the education wing. Sunday School is for children 3-years old through 6th grade. If you have questions about Sunday School or would like to help, please contact Heidi Jo Sovacool or Nancy Burmeister.

Confirmation

Confirmation is an educational ministry of Hope Lutheran Church, designed to help students understand and affirm the Christian faith, and participate more fully in the life and mission of the church, along with their families. Instruction usually begins in the 7th grade and concludes with Affirmation of Baptism in the fall of the 9th grade year.

Confirmation orientation will be held on Wednesday, September 15. The 7th & 8th graders will meet at 6:30pm and the 9th graders at 7:30pm. Regular Confirmation classes will begin on September 22. Additional information will be sent to Confirmation families soon. If you have a child in this age range and do not receive a letter in the mail, please contact the church office.

SUMMARY OF CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING AUGUST 17, 2021

Maintenance Position: The maintenance position is vacant due to Gary Bendixen's resignation.

Radio Broadcast: Quality of the radio broadcast has been inconsistent. There was discussion what should be done about it. Listeners will be asked to call the church office so we can get a better count of listeners and of the quality of the broadcast.

Adult Education & Fellowship: Book discussion group will NOT meet in September. Bible studies continue. Next meeting: September 10 at 2:00pm.

Congregational Care & Outreach: The farmer's market booth is going well. George will meet with the new radio station management to discuss ongoing problems with the radio broadcast. Next meeting: September 14 at 4:00pm.

Property Committee: There was no quorum. No action was taken. Next meeting: September 14 at 6:00pm.

Social Ministries: The Food Pantry paid to have the multipurpose room carpet cleaned. A subcommittee will meet to discuss the Food Pantry. Meals on Wheels in looking for volunteers. Next meeting: September 14 at 3:30pm.

Stewardship & Finance: Stewardship drive will take place in October with a Commitment Sunday in November. Next meeting: September 14 at 5:30pm.

Worship & Music: Committee is putting a hold on changing the eternal flame. Working on Back to Church Sunday. Next meeting: September 7 at 6:00pm.

Youth Education: No report given. Next meeting: TBD.

Youth Ministry: Mission trip to North Carolina took place at the end of July. Next meeting: September 2 at 6:00pm.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, September 21 at 6:30pm.



Deadlines...

Items for the weekly bulletin are due in the church office no later than noon on Wednesday. Items for the October newsletter are due no later than Tuesday, September 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 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
Maintenance	
Custodian	Rosemary Warwick
Choir Director	Heidi Jo Sovacool
Organists	Lisa Borman Karen Tappon Aileen Tauchen 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



September

BIRTHDAYS

- 1** Jim Doke
- 2** Michelle LaBlonde
Brody Kesan
- 3** Jim Cooley
Cash LaBrie
Alex Rausch
Sue Segebrecht
Julie Vollendorf
- 4** Josh Hills
- 5** Mark Bentley, Sr.
Hazel LaBlonde
- 6** Ryan Anderson
Nick Kirkey
Deborah Lentsch
- 7** Christopher Dauer
Brian Hon
Dan Petrus
- 8** Michael Bentley
Tyler Krisik
Stephanie Morgan
- 9** Barry Canfield
Bradon Martin
- 11** Ruben Allen
Timothy Brooks
Tammy Peggarr
Tom Segebrecht
- 12** Doug Moore, Jr.
- 13** George Calkins
- 14** Ellie Amick
Jill Berg
Andrea Hraban
Jarod Johnson
Christian Polak
- 15** Megan Kimber
Joe Smith
Leo Yugas
- 16** Jeanne Hess
Jay Meuli
Susan Warren
- 17** Sean Lacey
- 18** Joachim Eitenmiller
Gary Purgett
Anna Ringstad
- 19** Nick Goffin
Megan Gorsegner
Damien Tuttle
- 20** Emma Konichek
Nicholas Wiemer
- 22** Tori Busse
Pat Morgan
- 23** Barbara Stanton
- 24** Terry Miller
- 25** Jim Stanton
- 26** Yvonne Dedrickson
Ken McMahon
- 27** Geraldine Larson
Tami Moore
Ione Reder
- 28** Bob Grunseth
Jonathon Nelson
- 30** Delores Thorpe



September Worship Assistants

6	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Irene Titera, Nick Sovacool Irene Titera Bev Dukerschein Jackson Summerfield
12	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Charlie Holtebeck, Linda Reissner Charlie Holtebeck Chris Holtebeck Manny Moore
19	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Gordie & Bev Dukerschein Gordie Dukerschein Kathy Peterson Owen Burmeister
26	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Sovacool family Nick Sovacool Linda Campbell Kai Strom



2	Bob & Karen Langland	15	Brian & Laura Johnson
4	Gene & Barb Oldham	21	Vicki & Earl Monnier
5	Bob & Louise Boller	25	Nate & Tammy Peggarr
9	Brian & Veronica Curik Tiffany & Kyle Johnson	26	John & Gayleen Duzy
12	Jason & Cami Peggarr	27	Lindsay & Jeff Schmidt
13	Don & Nancy Bartig	28	Jerry & Marilyn Kulibert Anne & Peter Olson
14	Jack & Jackie Pederson	30	Nancy & Brian Burmeister



Teach us to pray

In Luke 11:1-13 (NIV), Jesus teaches about prayer.

Directions: Add or subtract the letters indicated and unscramble the letters to form a new word, using hints from the passage. Then unscramble the circled letters to answer the question below.

- party - t = p r A y (v. 1)
 lady + i = _ _ _ _ (v. 3)
 drab + e = _ _ _ _ (v. 5)
 rod + o = _ _ _ _ (v. 7)
 bask - b = _ _ _ _ (v. 9)
 keeps - p = _ _ _ _ (v. 9)
 define - ee = _ _ _ _ (v. 9)
 shift - t = _ _ _ _ (v. 11)
 sneaky - y = _ _ _ _ (v. 11)
 sift + g = _ _ _ _ (v. 13)

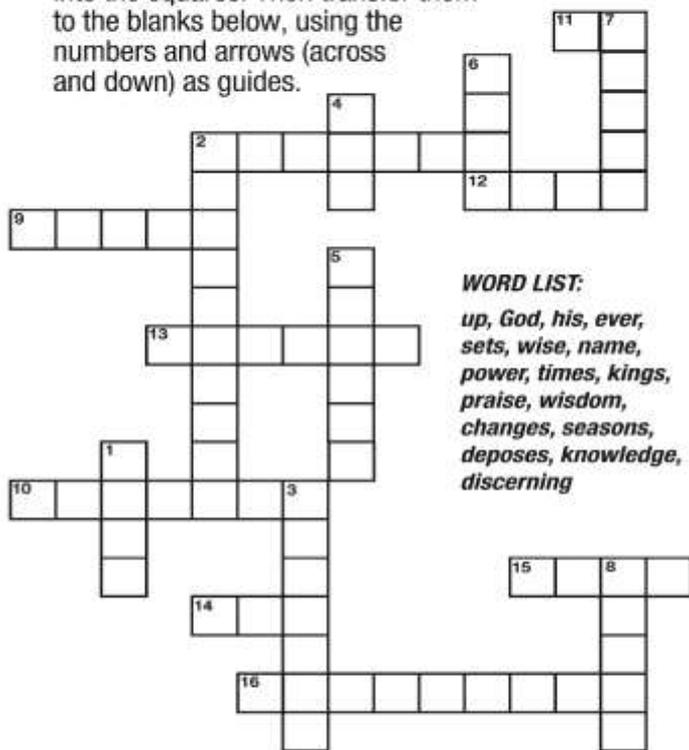


What will the Father give to those who ask of him?

_____ (v. 13)

Puzzle!

Fit these words from the book of Daniel into the squares. Then transfer them to the blanks below, using the numbers and arrows (across and down) as guides.



WORD LIST:

up, God, his, ever, sets, wise, name, power, times, kings, praise, wisdom, changes, seasons, deposes, knowledge, discerning

" _____ be to the _____ of _____ for _____ and _____ ;
 _____ and _____ are _____. He _____
 and _____ ; he _____ and _____
 them. He gives _____ to the _____ and _____ to
 the _____ ." DANIEL 2:20-21

Answer: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning." Daniel 2:20-21