

# Tidings of Hope

## January 2024



Hope Lutheran Church  
Ladysmith, Wisconsin

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## **A New Year's Resolution**

Pastor Christopher Martin

*As I look at the year that is rapidly drawing to a close, and pray over what God would have us do in 2024, I was reminded of this article I wrote for you right about this time a year ago. It's just as timely now as it was then, so I have asked Bonnie to reprint it and share it with you again this year. I pray that these words are a blessing to you in the coming year! ~ Pastor Martin*

It's hard to believe soon, we will be saying farewell to one calendar year, and will begin a new one. With that in mind, many of us are in the habit of making some sort of New Year's resolution, aren't we? In the days between Christmas and New Year's Day, you'll hear in various places about what people are going to resolve to do in order to bring about some positive change in their lives in the coming year. Thus it is not uncommon for people to resolve to exercise more, make changes in their diet so that they're eating healthier, find ways to reduce stress, quit smoking, or some other change that has good intentions, and promises to improve our quality of life. But what often happens to many of our new year's resolutions? Research tells us that, depending on who you listen to, the failure rate for New Year's Resolutions can be as high as 80 percent. Most of the time, by the middle of February at the latest, we give up, and lose our resolve to make the necessary, lasting changes in our lives in order to reach our goals that we set for ourselves with those New Year's resolutions.

Having said this, I want to invite you to take out your Bible and reading Luke 2:41-52; last childhood narrative of the life of Jesus that is recorded in the Gospels. Jesus is 12 years old and has gone with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, which Luke tells us was something they would have done every year. When it was time to make the trip home to Nazareth, after the first

day's journey, they discover Jesus isn't with them, or with anyone else they had traveled with. So, Mary and Joseph return to Jerusalem, and spend the next three days searching the city for Him, finally finding Jesus in the temple, listening to the teachers, asking them questions, and everyone is just astonished at what Jesus has to say. Mary asks Jesus why did He come up missing, and Jesus responds with His first recorded spoken words in the New Testament:

"Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49)

Some translations have Jesus saying: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" Regardless of how it is translated, Jesus is making a rather important point here. If you are looking for Jesus, the Word made Flesh, Immanuel, God with Us, you have to look for Him in the right place!

Jesus is the Word made flesh. He is Immanuel, God with us. That's exactly what the angels declared to Mary and Joseph before Jesus was even born, right? It's the same message we hear every year when we gather for worship at Christmas! We join the angels' song: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." (Luke 2:14)

As we seek out Christ, and we seek His will for our own daily lives, and our direction as a church in 2023, we have to make sure we're looking for God's will in the right place. If we're too busy looking in at ourselves, at our comfort zones, our expectations, or in other places in the world, we're going to be disappointed because that's not where Jesus has promised to be with us. Jesus' presence is in the Word and in the Sacraments. Our starting point is firmly rooted in Scripture. It is there we learn about the need to get rid of the sin that is in our lives that prevents us from allowing Christ to come in and transform our lives from being inclined inward to ourselves, and turned outward to be a light and witness to someone else about our faith. Every time we have an encounter with the Gospel, it will change our lives. The question is: how will it change yours?

As we enter this new year, I encourage you to take up one New Year's resolution for yourself, and for your entire household. I want to encourage each and every one of you to do two things as it

pertains to your life in Jesus Christ. The first is to make worship on Sunday mornings at Hope Lutheran Church a priority in your life. Why? Because it is here, that Jesus comes to dwell among you, and to share His Word with you. It is here that you are equipped for whatever work that God may be calling you to be about in your daily life. Second, I encourage each and every one of you to take time to be in Scripture outside of Sunday worship. Make use of devotional books such as “Our Daily Bread” that is provided for you, or another similar devotion that is faithful to God’s Word, or follow the appointed reading schedule found in the “Devoted to Prayer” daily scripture reading resource provided by the North American Lutheran Church and is enclosed with each month’s newsletter, or on the NALC website under the “Devotions” menu. If you’d like other resources to use to help you in digging deeper into God’s Word in the coming year, please feel free to stop by and visit with me sometime!

I hope and pray that for all of us at Hope Lutheran Church that as we look to this new year, we make being “Christ-Centered” in everything that we do in this place, and in our daily lives, our New Year’s Resolution. Don’t let it become a mere slogan, but I pray that you stay immersed in the Word, continue to seek to grow in your life of following Christ each day, and that through us, our witness to Jesus here in Rusk County, Iowa, and beyond will be a blessing to others, and draw them closer to our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God richly and daily bless each one of you in this coming year!

## **NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION**

The annual meeting of the congregation of Hope Lutheran Church will be on Sunday, January 28 at 10:15am. Voting members are those who have been confirmed and have attended and made a donation of record in the last two years.

### Mission Statement

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



## Hope Lutheran Church Women

**December Meeting:** The HLCW met on Thursday, December 14 for their monthly meeting and Christmas party. There were 11 members present. The treasurer's report was read and placed on file. There was a discussion about possible ideas to implement for next year's Cookie Walk. The group voted to make a donation for purchasing socks and underwear for the tree in the narthex. Judy Soyring applied for and received a \$200 grant for purchasing additional items for the tree. Officers for 2024 were elected: Kathy Peterson, president; Lisa Borman, vice president; Lois MacArthur, secretary; Josi Hamilton, treasurer.

**January Meeting:** The January meeting of the HLCW will be held on Thursday, January 18 at 9:30am. All women of Hope are welcome.

**Quilting:** The quilting group will meet on Tuesday, January 30 beginning at 9:30am. There are jobs for all skill levels. If you can stay for the whole day, please bring a sack lunch. Questions? Contact Karen Skeels (715-452-5444).

## Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry events are for students in grades 6-12 (unless otherwise noted). Friends are always welcome to attend.

**Donuts & Devotions:** Youth will meet for donuts & devotions following the worship service on Sundays, January 7, February 25, March 3, April 14.

**Games Day:** Youth are invited to come play games and enjoy a build-your-own sandwich lunch on Sunday, January 14 from 10:15am-12:30pm.

**Christie Mountain Ski Day:** Please mark your calendar for our annual Christie Mountain Ski Day. This event will take place on Sunday, February 11. Please watch for more details to come!

## Adult Education & Fellowship Opportunities

**Bible Study:** The “Fruit of the Spirit” study will meet on Sundays, January 7 and 14 at 10:30am in the Fireside Room.

**Book Group:** The book group will meet on Sunday, 21 at 10:30am in the Fireside Room. Participants are asked to bring their reading suggestions for the coming year.

**Meal of the Month:** The January Meal of the Month will take place on Wednesday, January 17 at 11:30am at the Eastern Chinese Restaurant. This is an opportunity for members of Hope to enjoy a meal and time of fellowship while supporting a local business.

**Potluck & Games:** The Service & Fellowship Committee is sponsoring a potluck lunch and game day on Sunday, January 21 at 11:45am in the fellowship hall. Please bring a dish to share and your favorite game. We will have cribbage, Flickin’ Chickens, cards, Yahtzee, and more.

## Hope Lutheran Food Pantry

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

Much of the food that is distributed through the food pantry comes from the Feed My People Food Bank. Volunteers are needed on Monday, January 15 at 9:15am to help unload this delivery and stock food pantry shelves.

Donations of non-perishable food items can be brought to the church during office hours or on Sunday morning. Monetary donations to help purchase food through Feed My People and other sources can be placed in the offering box, dropped off in the church office, or mailed to the church office (PO Box 184, Ladysmith). All donations should be clearly marked “Food Pantry”.

Thank you to everyone who supported the pantry throughout 2023. Whether you donated food, money or time, your support helped many families and individuals in our area experiencing food insecurity.

## Summary of Committee Action

Minutes from the December 19, 2023 Council meeting were not available when the newsletter went to print. Following is a summary of committee action in December.

**Congregational Care & Outreach:** The current series of GriefShare will wrap up on January 3. The “Love & Respect” marriage enrichment series will begin in January. Next meeting: January 3 at 3:30pm.

**Parish Education:** Discussing ideas for 2024 VBS. Next meeting: January 17 at 6:30pm.

**Property:** No minutes submitted. Next meeting: TBA.

**Service & Fellowship:** Bake sale raised \$376.75. Sent Christmas greetings and gift cards to 12 college students. Gathered more than 75 coats plus sweaters, hats, etc that have been distributed during food pantry hours. Left over items will be taken to the local homeless shelters. Game day and potluck scheduled for January 21. Next meeting: TBA.

**Social Ministries:** Committee voted to redesignate world hunger tithing from Lutheran World Relief to Feed My Starving Children. Community Thanksgiving Dinner served 270 meals. Hope Lutheran will serve at the Senior Center the week of January 8. Local benevolences and missions funds were designated for the Hope Lutheran Food Pantry and Wisconsin Special Olympics. Next meeting: January 9 at 4:00pm.

**Stewardship & Finance:** The budget for 2024 was constructed with a 5% increase in giving and 4% increase in wages. Next meeting: January 9 at 5:30pm.

**Worship & Music:** Continuing to make adjustments to the livestreaming and audio equipment to improve the broadcast. Next meeting: January 2 at 6:00pm.

**Youth Ministry:** Upcoming events include Donuts & Devotions on January 7 and a game day & lunch on January 14. Christie Mountain ski day in the works for February. Next meeting: January 10 at 6:30pm.

**Next Church Council Meeting:** January 16 at 6:30pm.



## 2024 A New Calendar



As you hang that new calendar on your wall, please remember to mark these important church dates:

January 28	Annual Congregational Meeting
February 14	Ash Wednesday (Worship)
February 21	Mid-Week Lenten Worship begins
March 24	Palm Sunday (Worship)
March 28	Maundy Thursday (Worship)
March 29	Good Friday (Worship)
March 31	Easter (Worship)
April 17	Scandinavian Dinner
April 28	Last Day of Sunday School
May 8	Last Day of Wednesday School
May 19	Pentecost Sunday (Worship)
September 8	Rally Day
October 27	Reformation Day/Confirmation
November 28	Community Thanksgiving Dinner
December 1	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent
December 7	Cookie Walk
December 24	Christmas Eve (Worship)

Watch upcoming newsletters, Sunday bulletins, and the church website ([hlcladysmith.org](http://hlcladysmith.org)) for more information on these events.

### 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](mailto:hlcladysmith@gmail.com)) with periodic updates so that we can keep the list current. If we do not receive an update, the person's name will be on the list for four weeks and then removed.





Items for the weekly bulletin are due in the church office no later than noon on Wednesday. Items for the February newsletter are due in the church office by January 16.

The preferred method of submission is via email ([hlcladysmith@gmail.com](mailto: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 email the church office at [hlcladysmith@gmail.com](mailto:hlcladysmith@gmail.com).

### **CHURCH STAFF**

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

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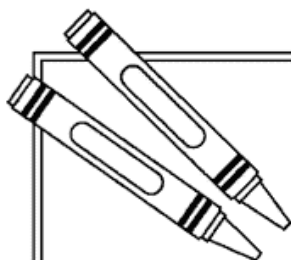
## WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

- |           |           |                                   |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>7</b>  | Ushers    | Rosemary Johnson, Aileen Tauchen  |
|           | Lector    | Jana Nyhagen                      |
|           | Comm Asst | Chris Holtebeck                   |
|           | Acolyte   | Izzy Solberg                      |
| <b>14</b> | Ushers    | Kathy Peterson, Nick Sovacool     |
|           | Lector    | Aileen Tauchen                    |
|           | Comm Asst | Irene Titera                      |
|           | Acolyte   | Blake Nyhagen                     |
| <b>21</b> | Ushers    | Dave Borman, Nick Sovacool        |
|           | Lector    | Nick Sovacool                     |
|           | Comm Asst | Bradon Martin                     |
|           | Acolyte   | Bradon Martin                     |
| <b>28</b> | Ushers    | Charlie Holtebeck, Aileen Tauchen |
|           | Lector    | Charlie Holtebeck                 |
|           | Comm Asst | Chris Holtebeck                   |
|           | Acolyte   | Tanner Davis                      |

### **2023 Statements of Giving and 2024 Offering Envelopes**

Statements of giving for 2023 will be sent out in the month of January. If your address has changed, please notify the church office so this document can be sent to the correct address.

Offering envelopes for 2024 can be picked up in the multi-purpose room. If you did not use offering envelopes in 2023 but would like to in 2024, please contact the church office.



# Just for KIDS

## New Year's Resolutions

Use the code to read some important words to live by.

CODE: A=1	D=4	H=8	L=12	P=16	T=20	X=24
B=2	E=5	I=9	M=13	Q=17	U=21	Y=25
C=3	F=6	J=10	N=14	R=18	V=22	Z=26
	G=7	K=11	O=15	S=19	W=23	

8 1 22 5 14 15 15 20 8 5 18 7 15 4 19

2 5 6 15 18 5 13 5

8 15 14 15 18 25 15 21 18 6 1 20 8 5 18

1 14 4 13 15 20 8 5 18

4 15 14 20 13 9 19 21 19 5

7 15 4 19 14 1 13 5

11 5 5 16 20 8 5 19 1 2 2 1 20 8

8 15 12 25

12 5 1 18 14 20 8 5 20 5 14

3 15 13 13 1 14 4 13 5 14 20 19

Answer: Have no other gods before me. Honor your father and mother. Don't misuse God's name. Keep the Sabbath holy. Learn the Ten Commandments.