

Tidings of Hope

March 2023



Hope Lutheran Church
Ladysmith, Wisconsin

Tidings of Hope

Information & Inspiration

March 2023

What a Mess

By Pastor Christopher Martin

When I was serving in Pennsylvania, one evening the council secretary of our church in a rural area of Franklin County called “Little Cove” invited me to her home for dinner before one of our council meetings. The couple lived on a farm about two miles north of the church, in a home that had been in their family for several generations. After dinner, the council secretary and her husband showed me a photo album of a house fire that had occurred there about 6 years before I arrived. As she told the story about the fire, and its devastation, she shared with me the part of all of it she remembered the most. The day after the fire, after the fire had been put out, the dairy barn had been saved, and the fire crews had left, the pastor who was serving the church at the time came out to the farm, got out of his car, and was looking at the devastation from the fire. As he looked over the pile of ashes and the shell of the burned out home, the first thing he said to the family when he greeted them was: “Wow. What a mess!” As I sat there looking at those photos from that fire, and then looked around at the house after it had been rebuilt, it amazed me how that messy pile of burned out ashes and charred wood could have been turned into a beautiful home once again.

Every year during Lent, I think about that farmhouse in Little Cove, Pennsylvania and the transformation it went through, because it is a perfect reminder of what this season of the church year is all about for the Christian. When we take stock of our lives, and reflect on God’s expectations of us in His Word, we really don’t have much to be proud of, do we? We see the mess that sin has left in our lives, and in our world. People have tried to ignore it or cover it up by trying to either change the Scriptures to say something they don’t in an effort to excuse their sin, or outright ignore Scripture altogether and just try to act as if God isn’t real and doesn’t care about our sin.

But such efforts are about as effective as trying to slap a coat of paint on the charred remains of that farmhouse and say it's good. It doesn't work in the end. The mess is still there! And there's not a thing we can do. And if that is the message of Lent, our hearts and lives are a mess, and there's nothing we can do to change it, then there's no much hope, is there?

That's why during Lent, we remember the purpose of Jesus' passion, His suffering, His death, and His resurrection from the dead! It is in all of these things that we see how Jesus rebuilds our lives by cleaning our hearts that are filled with the mess of sin, and takes that mess upon Himself as He suffers the consequences of our sins through His passion and death, and then raises up from the ashes of death to new life! All of this Jesus does for us, so that we, too, might die to sin, but rise from the ashes to a new life.

As we make this annual journey through Lent, which began on when we gathered for worship on Ash Wednesday, and once again had our foreheads marked with ashes, we remember the reality of sin, and what it does to us, "remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." But you'll notice those ashes were drawn in the shape of the cross, reminding you that Ash Wednesday is only the beginning point of our journey, not the end. This year in our midweek services, we will follow Jesus to different places of the passion, and we will see how in each stop along the way to His cross, and the empty tomb of Easter, Jesus is at work for us, to take the curse of our sin away, and instead, give us the gift of forgiveness, life, and hope. We remember that Jesus is present in our lives, both in moments of joy, and in moments where it feels like we're standing amid the charred ruins of our lives, and everywhere in between. And when Jesus is present, we know that He's at work to bring life and redemption to every place He visits.

I want to encourage each of you to think of someone in your life who isn't connected to Jesus. Maybe it's someone you once saw regularly in the pews of our church, but haven't seen them in some time. Perhaps it's that coworker or neighbor who is going through a difficult time in their lives, and they are in need of the hope and redemption that only Christ can bring. Whoever that person might be, take this opportunity to invite them to come with you to midweek Worship, so that we can feed their body with our soup suppers, and feed their souls with fellowship, and worship. May our Lord Jesus richly bless your journey through Lent this year!



Places of the Passion Midweek Lenten Worship

We began our annual journey through Lent with Jesus on Ash Wednesday. Many of the scenes we visit throughout Lent are familiar to us: the Upper Room, the Garden of Gethsemane, the halls of Pontius Pilate, and the hill of Golgotha. We visit many of these places every year as we follow Jesus through His passion and death. However, we sometimes forget that when Jesus enters a place, He never leaves it as He found it. The most troubling places in our lives become the most amazing places of God's grace when Jesus visits them.

For this year's midweek Lenten worship series, we will be reading and considering Luke's account of the passion. Each week, Luke will take us to a place of the Passion. Our focus will not be so much on the physical places, but we will witness what Jesus does at each place. He will share strength in our moments of weakness and fill us with praise in the midst of sorrow. We will discover at each place we visit Jesus is waiting for us, willing to share with us a love that was set in place before the foundations of the world.

Our midweek Lenten services will rotate between the churches of our parish, as we take this opportunity to worship and fellowship with one another. Each service in the month of March will be preceded by a soup supper from 5:00-6:00pm and a hymn sing that will begin in the sanctuary at 6:15pm. The worship service will begin at 6:30pm.

March 1 - "The Upper Room: A Place of Service" - Hope Lutheran
March 8 - "Gethsemane: A Place of Strength" - Glen Flora Lutheran
March 15 - "The Betrayal: A Place of Eternal Love" - Hope Lutheran
March 22 - "The Courtyard: A Place of Renewal" - Glen Flora
March 29 - "The Trial: A Place of God's Will" - Hope Lutheran



Hope Lutheran Church Women



Monthly Meeting: The HLCW will hold their annual Lenten breakfast on Thursday, March 16 at 9:30am. All Women of Hope are welcome to attend.

Quilting: The quilting group will meet on Tuesday, March 28 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 Opportunities

Bible Study: The study on the book of Revelation will meet on Sunday, March 5 at 10:30am.

Book Discussion: The book discussion group will meet on Sunday, March 19 at 10:30am. The book for March is At Home In Mitford by Jan Karon.



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 (March 6 & 20) at 9:15am to help unload the Feed My People delivery and to stock shelves.

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").



World Day of Prayer

“I Have Heard About Your Faith”

The 2023 Rusk County World Day of Prayer observance will take place on Friday, March at 1:00pm at Faith United Methodist Church. The theme for this year’s event is “I Have Heard About Your Faith” based on Ephesians 1:15-19 and is written by the women of Taiwan. There will also be a Bible sharing event on Friday, March 10 from 10:00-11:00am at the Ninth Street Café (Ladysmith Fresh Market) back room. This year’s Rusk County World Day of Prayer observance is sponsored by Faith United Methodist Church and Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church.

MANNA Meal

(Meals Available for the Nutritional Needs of All)

The March MANNA Meal will take place on Thursday, March 30 with serving from 5:00-6:00pm. This is a free meal providing food and fellowship to those in need. This month’s meal is sponsored by the Ladysmith Lions Club.

Grief Share

GriefShare is a faith based, nondenominational grief support group. The next cycle of GriefShare will begin on Thursday, March 2 at 6:00pm. To register for the second Grief Share cycle, please call the Hope Lutheran Church office (715-532-7739) and leave your contact information so a GriefShare facilitator can call you back or register online at <https://www.griefshare.org/groups/163096>.

Meal of the Month

The Meal of the Month is an opportunity for members of Hope to gather together for a meal, enjoy a time of fellowship, and support a local business. The March Meal of the Month will take place on Tuesday, March 21 at 11:30am at Grandpa’s Pizza. Everyone is welcome. If you have questions or need a ride, please contact Kathy Ducommun.



Middle and High School Youth are invited to a game night on Sunday, March 5 at 5:00pm. Youth should meet in the fellowship hall. Dinner will be provided. Friends are welcome. Please sign up on the Youth Ministry bulletin board so we know how much food to prepare.

Sunday School

The Sunday school year is going well and for the last several weeks had fun games and art projects that were associated with our New Testament lessons. Most recently, the children made a paper mache rock to symbolize Jesus telling Simon Peter that on this rock He will build His church (Matthew 16:13-25). It's never too late to join in the fun! Sunday School is for children 3 years old through 6th grade and meets each Sunday from 10:15-11:00am.

Livestreaming

Our Sunday morning worship services are livestreamed on the Hope Lutheran Church Facebook page each Sunday. 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.

The Worship & Music Committee is working on upgrading the equipment used to livestream. Volunteers who do the videography are currently using their personal cell phones to livestream, which causes inconsistencies in the quality of the audio and video. This will be a significant technology investment. If you would like to help make this upgrade possible, monetary donations of any amount are welcome.

Summary of February 21, 2023 Council Meeting

Pastor's Report: Pastor is thankful for being allowed to take time to attend to family in Iowa. He attended the NALC Pastors' Conference in San Antonio January 30 to February 3. The Mission District Convocation will be held October 6-7. Pastor will be leading a Small & Rural Church workshop at Glen Flora Lutheran Church on March 11 from 9:00am-3:00pm. All congregations in our Mission District is welcome to participate.

New Business: The Blue Hill Chorale has requested use of the church for a performance on Sunday, April 2 at 7:00pm. Council voted to approve this request.

Congregational Care & Outreach: The new GriefShare cycle begins on March 2. Starting work on Farmers Market booth. Next meeting: March 9 at 3:00pm.

Parish Education: The committee discussed changing the date of VBS and the potential of restarting Wednesday School. Men's breakfasts have been discontinued. Next meeting: TBA.

Property: Committee did not have a quorum, so no business was conducted. Next meeting: TBA.

Service & Fellowship: The committee is learning their new responsibilities. Lunch of the month will be March 21 at 11:30am. Cradle Roll will continue to fall under their responsibilities. Next meeting: TBA.

Social Ministries: No report given. Next meeting: March 14 at 4:00pm.

Stewardship & Finance: Some of the church's savings has been invested in CDs. Brian Buchholz will meet with Brian Johnson to discuss funding of needed repairs to the church building. Next meeting: March 14 at 5:30pm.

Worship & Music: Working on Lent. Special music is planned for Easter. Next meeting: March 7 at 6:00pm.

Youth Ministry: Looking at starting "Donuts & Devotions". Devotional books for teens have been ordered. Working on mini-mission trips. Planning for Lenten soup suppers and Easter breakfast. Next meeting: TBA.



Deadlines...

Items for the weekly bulletin are due in the church office no later than noon on Wednesday. Items for the April newsletter are due in the church office by March 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 (especially if you no longer use a landline), 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 an email 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 Tappan 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



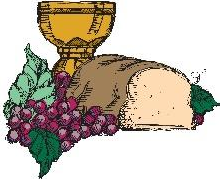
MARCH

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Corey Verdegan | 18 Kelsey Schwaller
Marshal Thompson |
| 2 Robert Duncan
Shad Para | 19 Leonard Hess |
| 4 Kathleen Dean | 21 Heather Brooks
Serena Samardzich
Jeremiah Young |
| 5 John Duzy
Jeremiah Jennerman
Julie Krisik | 23 Kyle Harmon
Khloe Larson
Barb vanDoorn |
| 6 Carol Redwine
Alyssa Schwaller
Shawn Vetterkind | 24 Linda Beckett
Andrew Borman
Scott Kauphusman
Kathi Kesan
James Stanton |
| 7 Gordie Dukerschein
Rob Goffin
Cayden Nehring
Adela Pederson | 25 Linda Campbell
Luke Rothenbach |
| 8 Tyler Polak
Kaitlyn Schott
Ross Vetterkind | 26 Scott Brooks
John Pohlman |
| 10 Jessica Hoehn | 27 Parker Titera |
| 12 Michelle Mincoff
Trisha Phillips | 29 Taylor DeWolf
Nicholas Harka
Sarah Kauphusman |
| 14 Sydney Schott | 31 Connie Haller
Arnie Olson |
| 15 Erin Murray | |
| 16 Dave Lemke
Nate Peggarr
Erin Craker | |
| 17 Carter Closs
Carter Soltis
Cathy Tappan | |

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- 14** Chuck & Jan Hyde
24 Bill & Yvonne Rands



March Worship Assistants

1 Weds.	Usher Lector	Sovacool, Kathy Peterson Bonnie Billings
5	Ushers Lector Comm. Assts. Acolyte	Sovacool Jana Nyhagen Linda Campbell Izzy Solberg
12	Ushers Lector Comm. Assts. Acolyte	Soyring Bonnie Billings Irene Titera Briley Burmeister
15 Weds.	Usher Lector	Irene Titera, Aileen Tauchen Irene Titera
19	Ushers Lector Comm. Assts.	Charlie Holtebeck, Kathy Peterson Charlie Holtebeck Bradon Martin
26	Ushers Lector Comm. Assts.	Charlie Holtebeck, Irene Titera Aileen Tauchen Irene Titera
29 Weds.	Usher Lector	Sovacool Bonnie Billings

Mission Statement

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