

Tidings of Hope

May 2025



Hope Lutheran Church
Ladysmith, Wisconsin

Tidings of Hope

Information & Inspiration

May 2025

“Reflections”

Pastor Christopher Martin

Over the next few weeks, I will be experiencing a number of “last things” with you as your Pastor. April has seen my last meeting with your Church Council at Hope, and my last Holy Week and Easter services with you. Soon, I will be having my last Confirmation classes, my last service with the residents of Ladysmith Care & Rehab, and on May 18, I will have my last service with you as your Pastor. Soon, you will be stepping into the future that God has in store for you as a congregation as you begin to discern your ministry options moving forward, and I make the transition from being a part of your present and future, to becoming a part of your past.

So, as I share this last message to you in this newsletter, how do I summarize the time we have spent together here at Hope in this pastor-parish relationship? My time with you has been defined by a lot of challenges. It all started right off the bat with arriving in the midst of COVID, and spending our first year together trying to navigate all that came with that difficult period of time.

During my season with you, we studied two books together: “Joining Jesus on His Mission: How to Be an Everyday Missionary” by Pastor Greg Finke, and “Autopsy of a Deceased Church” by Thom Rainer. These studies forced congregational leadership, and many of you as well, to reevaluate the present circumstances of Hope Lutheran Church, and in the process, ask a hard question of yourselves: What needs to change here at Hope for this congregation to have hope and vibrancy moving forward? These are never easy questions for any congregation to answer, and they put all of us here at Hope into a rather uncomfortable place to be: a place of transition and change—transition and change that were hard for many of you to accept, and embrace.

In the four and a half years we've shared, we have come to realize the Hope Lutheran Church of 2025 is a vastly different church than it was just a few years ago. You have gone from having two pastors on staff as recently as 2019, to now having one full time pastor who serves not only your ministry needs, but also those of a growing neighboring congregation, meaning that expectations you hold regarding your pastor needed to change. Some of our long-time, faithful members have passed away, while others have moved on to other churches and communities. More recently, we've experienced financial challenges. Along the way, there has been a lot of significant disagreement over the direction of this congregation and her ministry. Any one of us have understandably asked the question: "Is there a hope and future for Hope Lutheran Church, or is it only a matter of time before the doors of this church close forever?"

It's easy to focus on the less than pleasant parts of the time we've shared together, and it is extremely tempting to point fingers at those whom we believe are responsible. While it is important to not sugar coat things, and acknowledge the hard things for what they are, let's not dwell on them too much, or allow these things to define what God has done here at Hope Lutheran Church in these last four and a half years.

In the midst of all of the struggles and challenges, the Holy Spirit has still done some great things here in the time we've shared together. GriefShare has become a much-needed outreach ministry to the wider community, helping people see the hope and love of Jesus Christ in the midst of their grief and sorrow. I have joyfully witnessed some of you grow in your faith and understanding of God and His kingdom in Bible Studies we shared, in sermons on Sunday mornings, or information conversation that has taken place in a number of different settings. You have brought the light of Christ to people you will never meet through your donations of Flood Buckets, Quilts, and Health Care Kits to NALC Disaster Response. We have comforted grieving families who gathered in this place to bury their loved ones who died in Christ. We have rejoiced when parents brought their children to the baptismal font to begin their journey of discipleship, and when our young people made a public affirmation of their faith in the Rite of Confirmation. We have delivered the Gospel to homebound and hospitalized members and prayed for their needs. Our livestreaming ministry brings God's Word of truth, power, and life to people all over the world. For all of

these things, I pray that you will join with me in saying: “Thanks be to God” and it has been nothing short of a joy and privilege to have played a part in this work for God’s Kingdom with you.

I wish to say “Thank You” to so many, starting with our dedicated Staff—our secretary Bonnie Billings, custodian Rosemary Warwick, our organists, Lisa Borman, Terry Wedwick, and Karen Tappon. To those of you who have served on the Council or various Committees, as well as those of you who have generously given of your time and talent in so many ways that I’m afraid to start naming them out of fear that I might miss someone! The time we have shared in worship, witness, and work for the Kingdom of God has been enriched by all of you, and I will miss working with you.

If the ministry that I have shared with you here at Hope Lutheran Church has been a blessing to you in any way, shape, or form, I ask that you would join with me in these last weeks together in giving all praise, glory, and honor to God and to our Savior, Jesus Christ. It has been an honor and privilege to be in the instrument the Holy Spirit used in that moment of your life. If you did not appreciate my approach to ministry here at Hope, please know that I do leave here saddened that things did not work out the way that I, and I am certain you as well, had hoped they might when I first arrived. Despite our strong differences of opinion, please know that I never ceased lifting you up in prayer, and now as we soon go our separate ways, I am praying you will experience a better connection with your next Pastor, whomever that may be and whenever that person will arrive.

As I get ready to leave, I will not try to predict what the future holds for Hope Lutheran Church. None of us know what lies ahead. What we do know is this: what lies ahead for you at Hope will be different from your past. As you look to your future, I want to encourage you one last time to keep your individual life, and the life of Hope Lutheran Church, firmly rooted and centered in Jesus Christ and Him alone. Stay in His Word daily and challenge yourselves to grow in it each day of your life. When you make the journey of discipleship with Jesus at the center of your life, and everything you do as a congregation, you cannot be led astray.

My family and I will miss you all, and we will be lifting you up in prayer frequently in the months and years to come. Thank you for inviting us into your community, into your congregation, and into

many of your hearts these last four and a half years. May the peace of our crucified and risen Savior, Jesus, be with you today, tomorrow, and until we meet again.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

A Special Meeting of the Congregation will be held on Sunday, May 4 immediately following the 9:00am worship service (approximately 10:15am). The purpose of this meeting is to establish a Call Committee. All voting members are encouraged to attend. A voting member is a member of Hope who has a record of both having communed and made a contribution of record in either the previous or current year (2024 or 2025).



GriefShare continues to meet from 6-7:30 on Wednesdays from through May 28. GriefShare is 13-week lay-led, faith-based grief support group. The lay people leading the classes have experienced grief themselves and have gone through special training.

If you, or someone you know, would like to register for the program, please call the Hope Lutheran Church office at 715-532-7739 or register online at griefshare.org, just click on "Find a group" and enter the 54848 zip code.

Mission Statement

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

Vision Statement

The Hope Lutheran Church family seeks to form disciples of Jesus in our daily relationships with Christ through weekly worship, daily prayer, and empowering them to develop their spiritual gifts to serve God and others.



Graduate Recognition

We will be honoring the graduating high school seniors from our congregation on Sunday, May 18 at the 9:00am worship service. There will be a reception in their honor following the worship service. If you have a graduating senior and were not contacted, please contact the church office (715-532-7739 or hlcladysmith@gmail.com).

Book Discussion

The book group will meet on Sunday, May 18 at 10:30am in the Fireside Room to discuss The Winter Rose by Melanie Dobson.



Hope Lutheran Church Women

Monthly Meeting: The HLCW will hold their monthly meeting on Thursday, May 15 at 9:30am. Hostesses are Emily Peterson and Cora Schultz. All women of Hope are welcome.

Quilting: The quilting group will meet on Tuesday, May 20 beginning at 9:30am. 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. If you have questions, please contact Karen Skeels (715-452-5444).

Thank You: Thank you to everyone who helped to make the Scandinavian Dinner a successful event. Whether you cooked, served, donated, or simply came to enjoy the meal, we couldn't have done it without you!

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.

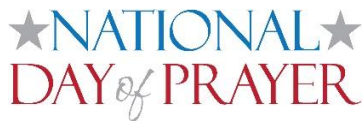
Much of the food that is distributed through the food pantry comes from the Feed My People Food Bank. Volunteers are needed on Mondays, May 5 & 19 at 9:15am to help unload this delivery and stock food pantry shelves.

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".

MANNA Meal

(Meals Available for the Nutritional Needs of All)

The May MANNA Meal will take place on Thursday, May 29 with serving from 5:00-6:00pm. This is a free meal providing both food and fellowship to those in need of either. This month's meal will be prepared and served by the Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Anthony's Catholic churches.



The Rusk County National Day of Prayer observance will take place on Thursday, May 1, 2025, from 12:00-1:00pm at the in Memorial Park Amphitheater. If there is rain, the event will be moved to the Veterans Pavilion. Everyone is welcome!

The National Day of Prayer is an annual event observed on the first Thursday of May, dedicated to prayer and reflection. It's a day for people of all faiths to come together and pray for the nation, its leaders, and its people.

Summary of April 15 Council Meeting

Guest Open Discussion: Rosemary Johnsonson presented a handout detailing her thoughts on providing a committee structure. Rose Warwick expressed concerns about communication.

Pastor's Report: Did five visits with Communion. Delivered 60 quilts and 40 health kits to the NALC Disaster Response warehouse. Confirmation will conclude on May 14 for four students who will be confirmed in October. Will conduct the chapel service at Ladysmith Care & Rehab on May 14. May 18 will be his final service at Hope.

Council Structure: The following Council members have agreed to chair committees contingent on the April 27 congregational vote: Parish Education – Laura Johnson; Property – Brian Johnson; Worship & Music – Dave Borman; Congregational Care – Cora Schultz; Youth Ministry – TBD.

Call Committee: Council approved a letter to the congregation regarding establishing a Call Committee. The congregational meeting to do so will be held May 4.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, May 20 at 6:30pm.

The full minutes of the monthly Council meeting can be found in a binder in the narthex. Minutes can also be obtained by contacting the church office (715-532-7739 or hlcladysmith@gmail.com).

January thru March 2025 Giving & Expenses

Total Offerings Received	\$43,764.45
Total Expenses	<u>\$65,123.49</u>
Difference	(\$21,359.04)
3/31/25 Checking Acct. Balance	\$ 9,316.10
Average Sunday Attendance	44

Upcoming DEADLINES

Items for the weekly bulletin are due in the church office no later than noon on Wednesday. Items for the June newsletter are due in the church office by May 20.

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 email 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

May Worship Assistants

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|------------------------------|
| 4 | Ushers | Jeff & Rosemary Johnson |
| | Lector | Aileen Tauchen |
| | Comm Asst | Rosemary Johnson |
| | Acolyte | Violet Craker |
| 11 | Ushers | Kathy Ducommun, Irene Titera |
| | Lector | Jana Nyhagen |
| | Comm Asst | Irene Titera |
| | Acolyte | Blake Nyhagen |
| 18 | Ushers | Jeff & Rosemary Johnson |
| | Lector | Bonnie Billings |
| | Comm Asst | Rosemary Johnson |
| | Acolyte | Addison Hulle |
| 25 | Ushers | Jer & Pat McEathron |
| | Lector | Irene Titera |
| | Comm Asst | Irene Titera |
| | Acolyte | |

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.

Prayer Concerns

If you have asked to have someone listed in the prayer concerns in the Sunday bulletin, please contact the church office with periodic updates so that we can keep the list current. Names will be removed from the list after four weeks unless an update is provided.



A lasting promise

Before ascending into heaven, Jesus speaks a final promise to the disciples.

Directions: Use the picture clues to find the letters. Then write that word below to complete Acts 1:8, NIV.

Find a letter that's in  but not in . _____

Find a letter that's in  but not in . _____

Find a letter that's in  but not in . _____

Find a letter that's in  but not in . _____

Find a letter that's in  but not in . _____

“But you will receive _____ when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

ACTS 1:8, NIV