

# Tidings of Hope

December 2024



Hope Lutheran Church  
Ladysmith, Wisconsin

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Information & Inspiration  
December 2024

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## **A Quiet Advent** **Pastor Christopher Martin**

On December 1, we will begin one of my favorite seasons of the liturgical calendar: Advent. It is one of the shortest seasons of the Church Year, consisting of the four Sundays prior to Christmas Day. For many people, Advent is simply an early extension of Christmas, and thus, they use Advent to get a head start on Christmas. But, if that's what our focus happens to be this time of the year, we will miss out on something very important that this short season has to teach us not just about the birth of our Savior, but about our life of discipleship, of following Jesus, today.

The word "Advent" actually comes from a Latin word, "Adventum", which literally means: coming. That's the theme of Advent: Jesus is coming into the world! God's promises of a Savior from sin, death, and the power of Satan are coming through the flesh and blood of the baby who lies in Bethlehem's manger.

When someone important is coming to visit you, what do we often do? We get our home ready for that person's arrival! We mark that date on the calendar, we clean our homes, make arrangements for their stay, and all the other things that go into hosting that person for as long as they will be with us. That is the purpose of this season: to allow us to set aside everything that is going on in our lives, get into God's Word, spend time in prayer, and prepare our hearts for the annual celebration of the real miracle that happens at Christmas: the incarnation, the reality that God takes on our human flesh and blood, spends nine months in his mother's womb just as we do, and is born into the world, for one purpose. To be our Savior! To keep God's Law in our place, and to suffer, die, and rise from the dead, so that we would have our relationship with God restored and have true peace, hope, and life everlasting!

In my previous calls, one of the ways we prepared our hearts and minds for the celebration of our Savior was that we took some time during the week to gather together in the middle of the week throughout Advent for special Advent services. We would read through the Advent accounts in Luke 1 and Matthew 1, and hear how God prepared the world for its Savior. While we are not going to do so this year, I would encourage you to take some time these next few weeks and read those two chapters of the New Testament. What you will find is this: you will see how God, after hundreds of years of silence, is at work in quiet, yet powerful ways, to bring about His plan of salvation. You'll see a truth that Advent reveals for us: God doesn't work the way we often expect Him to. His work is often quiet and hidden, just as it was in the womb of a young virgin from the small, unremarkable village of Nazareth. At Christmas, you'll see the first to worship the newborn King were not rich, powerful rulers, but were Shepherds, people who were likely toward the bottom of the first century social ladder.

Advent teaches us something important as we prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming into our lives: His ways are not our ways. He is more often at work in small, quiet ways than ways that draw a lot of attention. And that's a good thing. Because the reality is: Jesus does come into our lives today! But, just as it was that first Advent and Christmas over 2,000 years ago, He does so hidden. Just as His glory, power, and might were hidden, first in Mary's womb and then in the flesh and blood of a baby, His presence, power, glory, and might are hidden today through the Word and in the Sacraments. The world in which we live just like that first Advent and Christmas, is often quick to dismiss that reality, but just as angels brought the Word to people like Mary, Joseph, and the Shepherds in those Advent accounts in Matthew and Luke, God brings His Word to us to see the presence of our Savior, Jesus, in Word and Sacrament today.

I encourage each and every member of this congregation to set aside everything that is going on in your life and, yes, in the life of our congregation, that is distracting us from the Word. Let's devote ourselves to spending time in Scripture, let it lead each one of us to see the sin in our own lives, and to center ourselves in our savior, Jesus, and His Word. Have a blessed Advent journey.



Worship with Holy Communion  
Tuesday, December 24  
4:00pm

*“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*  
Isaiah 9:6

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## **Children's Christmas Pageant**

The children of Hope Lutheran Church will be presenting their Christmas pageant, “The Fumbly Bumbly Angels” on Sunday, December 15 during the 9:00am worship service. Refreshments will be served in the fellowship hall following the service. Everyone is welcome!



## Hope Lutheran Church Women

**Monthly Meeting:** The HLCW will hold their annual Christmas party on Thursday, December 19 at 9:30am. All women of Hope are welcome!

**Quilting:** The quilting group will not meet in December but quilt squares are also available to be sewn at home. Beginning in January the quilters will be meeting on the third Tuesday of each month instead of the fourth Tuesday. Questions? Contact Karen Skeels (715-452-5444).

**School Collections:** The HLCW will again be collecting items for areas schools. Items needed are underwear, sweatpants, and leggings for boys and girls. There will also be a collection of school supplies. Items can be placed in the narthex.

**Cookie Walk:** The Cookie Walk will take place on Saturday, December 7. Members of Hope are asked to bake five dozen or more home baked cookies or Scandinavian pastries. Volunteers are also needed to help with set-up and working the day of the event. Sign-up sheets will be available in the narthex. If you are unable to bake, please consider a donation of \$10 or more to help defray expenses. If you have questions about the Cookie Walk, please contact Cindy Albus, Lisa Borman, Jackie Buchholz, or Dee Peterson.

## Adult Education & Fellowship Opportunities

**Book Discussion:** The book discussion group will meet on Sunday, December 15 at 10:30am in the Fireside Room. The book for November is Two From Galilee by Marjorie Holmes.

**Meal of the Month:** The next Meal of the Month will take place on Thursday, December 5 at 11:30am at the Eastern Chinese Restaurant. This is an opportunity for members of Hope to enjoy a meal and fellowship while supporting a local business. Everyone is welcome. If you would like to carpool, please see Kathy Ducommun.



## *Cookie Walk - December 7*

The HLCW will be holding their annual Christmas Cookie Walk on Saturday, December 7 from 10:00-11:30am. In addition to dozens of varieties of Christmas cookies sold by the pound, Scandinavian pastries, lefse, julekaga and Norwegian meatballs will also be for sale.

Please help us continue this tradition by donating five dozen or more of your favorite Christmas cookies. Cookies should be brought to the church by 12:00noon on Friday, December 6. If you'd like to help but are unable to bake, monetary donations to help offset expenses are also appreciated.

Volunteers are needed to help with making meatballs and baking & decorating cookies on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 3 & 4. If you have questions, please contact Kathy Peterson.



## **Community Christmas Dinner**

St. John's Lutheran Church will be hosting a FREE Community Christmas Dinner for families in need and for those who will not be able to celebrate with family and friends. This event will be held on Christmas Day, December 25 at St. John's Lutheran Church (515 College Ave W). RSVPs are requested but not required. Please call St. John's Lutheran Church (715-532-5780) for more information.

## **Advent Devotional**

Advent begins on Sunday, December 1. The NALC will again have an Advent devotional on the NALC website. These will also be posted on the NALC Facebook page. <https://thenalc.org/advent-christmas-devotional-2024/>

were designated for Shop With a Cop and NALC Disaster Response. Next meeting: December 10 at 4:00pm.

**Stewardship & Finance:** Working on budget for 2025. Giving for January thru October is at 79% of budget. Next meeting: December 12 at 5:30pm.

**Worship & Music:** Advent begins December 1. There will be one service at 4:00pm on Christmas Eve. Next meeting: TBA.

**Youth Ministry:** A game day is scheduled for January 12. Sleep in Heavenly Peace has asked for pillow donations. Committee is challenging the congregation to provide these. Next meeting: TBA.

**Next Council Meeting:** December 17 at 6:30pm.

## **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 Mondays, December 2 & 16 at 9:15am to help unload the Feed My People delivery and to stock shelves. If you have questions, please contact Josi Hamilton (715-532-6052). Donations can be brought to the church on Sunday mornings, during pantry hours, or dropped off in the office during office hours. Monetary donations should be made payable to the Hope Lutheran Food Pantry and placed in the offering box or sent to the church.

### **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.*

## SUMMARY OF COUNCIL & COMMITTEE ACTION NOVEMBER 2024

**Pastor's Report:** One hospital visit, one private celebration of Holy Communion for a member, officiated at three funerals, numerous office and telephone visits with members. Three youth were confirmed on October 27. Two members were released from membership at their own request. Confirmation class is currently studying the Apostles' Creed. The NALC will again have an Advent devotional. He was asked to provide the December 22 devotion and is working on the NALC Lenten devotional. Informed the Council that Glen Flora Lutheran has ratified the amendments to the Parish Agreement that was adopted by the Hope Lutheran council on October 22.

**Special Meeting:** Council agreed to the rules of procedure for the Special Congregational meeting on December 8.

**New Business:** Signature cards at Security Financial Bank have been updated. Don & Sarah Solberg have offered to donate a Christmas tree again this year. Executive Committee will perform a written evaluation for the pastor. Pastor will perform written evaluations for staff members.

**Congregational Care & Outreach:** Hope has the display at the Visitors Center in December. The Marriage Enrichment group will no longer be a ministry of Hope Lutheran Church and will instead be done in homes. The group has requested that the group's social media pages be deleted, which has been done. Next meeting: December 4 at 4:15pm.

**Parish Education:** Christmas Pageant will be December 15. Wednesday School will go caroling on December 18. Laura Johnson is now teaching Sunday School. Next meeting: December 4 at 4:45pm.

**Property:** Committee did not meet in November but flooring in the transepts was repaired, outside signs were stabilized, Jeremy Jacobs has been hired to do sidewalk snow removal. Next meeting: December 10 at 6:00pm.

**Social Ministries:** Food pantry assisted 132 families in October. October MANNA Meal served 39. Benevolence and Missions funds





## **Deadlines...**

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

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

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



## December Worship Assistants

<b>1</b>	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Kathy Ducommun Bonnie Billings Irene Titera Nolan Kammerud
<b>8</b>	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Charlie & Chris Holtebeck Charlie Holtebeck Chris Holtebeck Sawyer Solberg
<b>15</b>	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolyte	Kathy Peterson, Irene Titera Irene Titera Irene Titera Violet Craker
<b>22</b>	Ushers Lector Acolyte	Kathy Peterson, Aileen Tauchen Irene Titera Nolan Kammerud
<b>24</b>	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolytes	Aileen Tauchen, Irene Titera Jana Nyhagen Irene Titera Blake Nyhagen, Sawyer Solberg
<b>29</b>	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst. Acolytes	Dave Borman, Kathy Ducommun Rosemary Johnson Dave Borman Addison Hulle

### Deadline

The treasurer's books for 2024 will close immediately following the 9:00am worship service on Sunday, December 29. Donations received after that time will be credited to 2025 giving.



## Poinsettias to Decorate the Sanctuary

We will once again be using poinsettias to decorate the church for Christmas. If you would like to donate a plant, please complete the form and return it to the church office no later than Monday, December 16. Plants should be brought to the church by Sunday, December 22.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

# of plants: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

