

Tidings of Hope

April 2025



Hope Lutheran Church
Ladysmith, Wisconsin

Tidings of Hope

Information & Inspiration

April 2025

When Plans Change

Pastor Christopher Martin

I am certain you have all heard the old joke: “How many Lutherans does it take to change a light bulb?” We joke about these things because in a lot of ways, the joke highlights a truth: we don’t handle change very well. Whether it be small changes, or especially big changes.

You have likely noticed that this edition of the Tidings is arriving much later than usual, and that was by my request. Just as late as two weeks ago, I was planning to use this space to write an article about Easter, since we will soon celebrate it on April 20th. However, something happened that led me to decide to change my focus of this particular newsletter article, and in response, to ask Bonnie to hold off on its publication until now.

As most of you have likely heard by now, earlier this week, I submitted my resignation from my calls to Hope Lutheran Church, Ladysmith and Glen Flora Lutheran Church, Glen Flora, effective May 31, 2025 as I have received, and accepted, a call to return to our home state of Iowa. While for some of you, this news does not come as a surprise, for others, this is something you did not expect, at least, perhaps not right now. I realize that when a pastor announces to their congregation that they are leaving, it creates a level of anxiety in a congregation under normal, healthy circumstances. I also know that level of anxiety with many in both churches is going to be higher than normal because for one, we’ve faced a lot of challenges recently, but also because as I get ready to leave, the reality is that there are far more congregations in the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) that are trying to call a new pastor, than there are pastors who are available for call, or new seminary graduates seeking their first call. And this is also true for other Lutheran brothers and sisters in LCMC, the Missouri Synod,

and others. The big fear that I have heard expressed among some of you is that since it took almost two and a half years between Pastor Hanson's leaving for Ohio and my arrival here at Hope and Glen Flora, how much longer could a vacancy continue in the present circumstances if I ever were to leave this parish?

So, the question becomes this: what does God have in mind for our future? My family and I have been forced to ask that question for ourselves, because when this calendar year began on January 1st, we did not see ourselves leaving Rusk County or this parish anytime soon, and it was only recently when this particular call process unfolded, that we discovered God's plans for our ministry were changing in ways we didn't see possible. As you face some significant change in the upcoming weeks, I want to invite you to look into your Bible at a moment of change in ministry plans that the apostle Paul went through, recorded in Acts 16:6-15.

Here, we see that at the beginning of this section of the book of Acts, Paul and his traveling companions had in mind that they were going to preach the Gospel in Asia. But, quickly, for one reason or another, the Holy Spirit wouldn't allow them to go there. Next, they set their sights on Bithynia, but "the spirit of Jesus did not allow them" (Acts 16:7) While the Biblical record doesn't mention anything along these lines, I would imagine human nature being what it is, Paul and the others were getting frustrated. Why all the closed doors? Why wouldn't God want Paul to preach the Gospel in Asia, or Bithynia? It's then we see why God closed these doors. He had other plans for Paul and needed him to go somewhere else. Paul receives the vision of a man from Macedonia, pleading with Paul to come help them. Paul immediately recognizes this call was from God, and he immediately sets out in that direction, and it's there, we see Paul ends up in Philippi, where he meets Lydia, the wealthy dealer of purple cloth. The Holy Spirit opens her heart to Paul's preaching, she and her entire household are baptized into the Christian faith, and she opens her home to Paul and the others so they can go about their mission work there.

If you had asked me on January 1st of this year where I thought I would be on June 1st, I would have told you that I was still going to be here at Hope and Glen Flora, continuing on in the ministry we've been doing together in these two churches for the last four and a half years. However, in recent weeks, the Holy Spirit has been at work, and now, those plans have changed, and soon, we will be

going our separate ways. As you face the uncertainty that goes along with this transition, in particular knowing that the upcoming vacancy will not be easy to fill for a variety of reasons, you may be feeling that a door of ministry opportunity is slamming shut, and you may be wondering “God, what are you up to right now?” As you work through all of these emotions in these my final weeks with you as your Pastor, and in the months to come after I leave, there’s something I want you to bear in mind as we enter this uncertain future.

Soon, we will gather for the last time together as pastor and parish to go through the services of Holy Week. We will follow Jesus from His triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, to the Upper Room of Maundy Thursday, to his arrest, suffering, and death on Good Friday, and finally, we will journey with the women to the empty tomb on Easter Sunday, the first day of the new week. As we do, there is something that I want you to specifically take note of this year: God has the power to bring new life from what appears to be dead. Just as He raises Jesus from the dead, and uses something evil for our good, He still has the power to bring new life from the end of something we held onto.

With the coming conclusion of our mutual ministry, part of that process will be like grieving a family member or friend who has died. And we recognize that for all of us, things won’t ever be the same as they used to. However, as you soon start looking toward the future, I firmly believe that God still has life and a purpose for the ministry of Hope and Glen Flora Lutheran Churches. It’s likely going to need to be different than it’s always been in the past, or than it is today. God will be using this upcoming vacancy to prepare the next person who will serve as your Pastor for that ministry, and He will be at work in you to make the changes you need to make to receive that person, whomever it will be and whenever that person will arrive.

As we spend these last few weeks together as pastor and parish, and celebrate Easter together one last time, I am certain there will be much more to say about the last four and a half years we have spent together. But I also hope that we continue to keep our eyes focused on our crucified and risen Savior, Jesus. Be open to whatever He’s calling you to in these last few weeks, and in the future after I leave. Because remember, God is in the business of resurrection and new life!



Holy Week & Easter Worship



Palm Sunday, April 13

Worship with Holy Communion at 9:00am

Maundy Thursday, April 17

Worship with Holy Communion at 6:30pm

Good Friday, April 18

Worship at 6:30pm

Easter Sunday, April 20

Worship with Holy Communion at 7:00am & 10:00am



GriefShare continues to meet from 6-7:30 on Thursdays from through April 10 and then on Wednesdays from April 16 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.



Hope Lutheran Church Women

Monthly Meeting: The HLCW will hold their annual Lenten Breakfast & Communion Service on Thursday, April 3 at 9:30am. Hostesses are Josi Hamilton and Lois MacArthur. All women of Hope are welcome.

Quilting: The quilting group will meet on Tuesday, April 15 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).

Book Discussion

The book group will be discussing If I Were You by Lynn Austin on Sunday, April 13 at 10:30am in the Fireside Room.

Bible Study

A new Sunday morning Bible study using the lectionary readings for the week has begun. This group meets most Sundays at 10:30am in the Fireside Room.



Scandinavian Dinner

The Hope Lutheran Church women will hold their Scandinavian Dinner on Wednesday, April 30 from 4:30-6:30pm. The cost of the meal is \$15/adults, \$16/carry-out, \$10/children K-5th grade, and children PK and younger eat free. The menu will include baked ham, meatballs & gravy, mashed potatoes, baked beans, glazed carrots, salads, homemade rolls, lefse, rice pudding, and Scandinavian baked goods.

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, April 7 & 21 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 April MANNA Meal will take place on Thursday, April 27 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 Bakers Dozen homemakers and the Power House Youth Center.

Blue Hills Chorale

The Blue Hill Choral will perform at Hope Lutheran on Saturday, April 12 at 1:00pm. There is no admission charged but a free-will offering will be received. Refreshments will be served following the performance.

Wednesday School

Wednesday School continues to meet each Wednesday from 3:15-4:45pm. It's never too late to join in the fun and learning. The last day of Wednesday School for this school year is April 30.

Summary of March 18 Council Meeting

Pastor's Report: Held four meetings in his office. Conducted the chapel service at Ladysmith Care & Rehab on March 12. Attended the Mission District Executive Council meeting. Met with the HLC Executive Committee. Did one Communion visit.

Treasurer's Report: Year-to-date envelope offering at the end of February was \$22,967, which is \$5,033 below the YTD budget. YTD expenses totaled \$41,176.

Council Structure: Following discussion of the constitutional responsibilities of the Council, council voted to present changes to the congregation. An informational meeting will be held April 6 with a congregational meeting on April 27.

Easter Services: The Worship & Music Committee decided last fall to discontinue the 10:00am worship service on Easter Sunday. Council voted to reinstate that service.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, April 15 at 6:30pm.

January thru February 2025 Giving & Expenses

Total Offerings Received	\$28,979.45
Total Expenses	<u>\$41,176.36</u>
Difference	(\$12,196.91)
Average Sunday Attendance	47

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.



Items for the weekly bulletin are due in the church office no later than noon on Wednesday. Items for the May newsletter are due in the church office by April 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 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
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P.O. Box 184
Ladysmith, WI 54848
Church Phone: 715-532-7739
E-Mail Address: hlcladysmith@gmail.com
Website: hlcladysmith.org



April Worship Assistants

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|-----------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 6 | Ushers | Dave & Laurie Lemke |
| | Lector | Bonnie Billings |
| | Comm Asst | Dave Lemke |
| | Acolyte | Violet Craker |
| 9 | Ushers | Aileen Tauchen |
| | Lector | Bonnie Billings |
| | Acolyte | Nolan Kammerud |
| 13 | Ushers | Kathy Ducommun, Aileen Tauchen |
| | Lector | Irene Titera |
| | Comm Asst | Rosemary Johnson |
| | Acolyte | Violet Craker, Blake Nyhagen |
| 17 | Ushers | Jeff & Rosemary Johnson |
| | Lector | Rosemary Johnson |
| | Comm. Asst | Irene Titera |
| | Acolyte | Addison Hulle |
| 18 | Ushers | Aileen Tauchen |
| | Lector | Aileen Tauchen |
| | Acolyte | Nolan Kammerud |
| 20 | Ushers 7am | Jeff & Rosemary Johnson |
| | Lector | Jana Nyhagen |
| | Comm Asst | Rosemary Johnson |
| | Acolyte | Nolan Kammerud, Blake Nyhagen |
| | Ushers 10am | |
| | Lector | |
| | Comm Asst | |
| | Acolyte | |
| 27 | Ushers | Irene Titera, Aileen Tauchen |
| | Lector | Irene Titera |
| | Comm Asst | Irene Titera |
| | Acolyte | Addison Hulle |



EASTER *Garden*

We will once again be using flowering plants to decorate the sanctuary for Easter. If you would like to donate a plant, please complete the form and return it to the church office no later than Sunday, April 13. Plants should be brought to the church no later than noon on Saturday, April 19. Plants can be taken home after the 10:00am worship service on Easter Sunday, April 20.

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Number of plants: _____

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____
