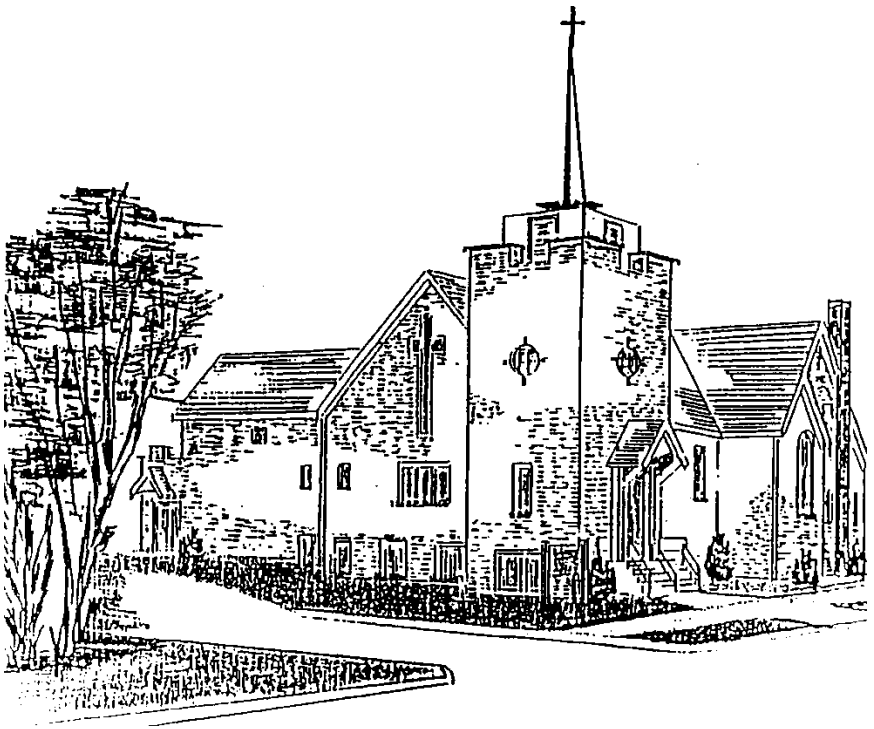


Tidings of Hope

120 Years of Hope

June 2023



Hope Lutheran Church
Ladysmith, Wisconsin

Tidings of Hope

Information & Inspiration

June 2023

A Future and a Hope for Hope Lutheran Church

Pastor Christopher Martin

“For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.”
(Jeremiah 29:11-12)

These words from the Old Testament prophet Jeremaih were originally written to the people of Israel who were about to endure an extremely painful period of their history. At this point, the Israelites had forsaken God, refused to heed His call to repentance of their sin and idolatry, and return to Him and receive His forgiveness and life. As a result, soon, the Babylonians would come, take Jerusalem by force, reduce the temple to rubble, and send the surviving Israelites to live into exile in Babylon. Once this happened, things would seem to be hopeless for the people of Israel. Yet, in the midst of all of this, for the remnant of God’s people who remained faithful to Him, Jeremiah, who is sometimes called the “Weeping Prophet”, has some words of tender encouragement and hope to proclaim. To that faithful remnant, Jeremiah speaks these familiar words I quoted at the beginning of this article. In the midst of destruction, as the people of God are living in a faraway land as exiles, not knowing when, or if, they will ever go home again, Jeremiah reminds them that God has them in His hand. He has plans for them they may not understand. Plans that are not for their destruction, but of hope for their future. A future that will look much different than their past, but one in which there is hope nonetheless, as long as they remain faithful to God during this time of momentary suffering and pain.

I share this account from the Old Testament with you because your Church Council and I have begun a conversation regarding the

health of Hope Lutheran Church. As some of you may be aware, 2023 marks the 120th Anniversary of the organization of Hope Lutheran Church. Over the course of those years, we've witnessed many changes in this church's life. I've heard many of our long-time members share stories of having two worship services every Sunday, classrooms full of children for Sunday School, a full choir, an active Luther League group, having a staff that included two full time pastors and a youth director, and so many more things. And I have no doubt those were exciting days to be a part of this congregation! But we look around at where we are today, and we have questions. It's obvious that the Hope Lutheran Church of 2023 is not the same Hope Lutheran Church from 2003. How did we get to where we are today? What lies ahead for our future? Do we have a future? Similar questions that the exiles to whom Jeremiah wrote had over their circumstances.

As the spiritual leader of Hope, after a considerable amount of prayer and reflection, I made the executive decision just as Lent was beginning that the time had come to formally address these questions. As a part of my Pastor's Report at the March council meeting, I distributed copies of the book "Autopsy of a Deceased Church" by Thom S. Rainer to every Council member. In 2014, Rainer set out to visit with members of fourteen churches that had closed, and this short book summarizes his findings of what led to the deaths of these churches in an effort to help other churches revitalize and live before it was too late. There were 10 factors that Rainer identified that led to the demise of these churches. In addition, Rainer identified four categories of congregational health: Healthy, Showing Signs of Sickness, Very Sick, and Dying. (I encourage you to either read the book or visit with me if you want to know the exact criteria Rainer uses for each category, especially the difference between Showing Signs of Sickness and Very Sick.)

I asked your Council members to read this short, 100-page book, with the expectation we would be discussing it soon. As they began to read, and even share the book with other members of Hope, I began to hear this phrase frequently from those who were reading it: "Pastor, I see our church in a lot of what he's saying." I was happy to see that people were taking this to heart! At our April Council meeting, after giving the Council a month to read and reflect on the book, I gave each member a brief questionnaire, asking them to honestly answer two questions. All ten Council members who were

present at this meeting responded. In the first question, I asked which of the categories of church health identified in the book do they feel describe the health of Hope Lutheran Church today. One member indicated they felt Hope is Healthy; five responded they feel Hope is Showing Signs of Sickness; four felt that Hope is Very Sick. No one said they felt Hope was Dying. In the second question, I asked if Hope Lutheran Church were to close its doors tomorrow, would anyone in our community, outside of our current members and our Food Pantry clients, even know we were gone? Five members said yes; four said no; one indicated they didn't know.

What these responses indicated to me and your Council was this: Hope Lutheran Church is at a critical point in her history. **While there is no defining moment or criteria for when a church crosses over from Showing Signs of Sickness to being Very Sick, it is clear Hope Lutheran Church is walking that line right now.** This is important to recognize and address now, as opposed to ignoring it or kicking this down the road any longer because the reality is, as Rainer notes in the book, that **once a church crosses over into being Very Sick, it is rare that the church returns to being healthy, and, sadly, the vast majority of churches that reach this category don't make it.**

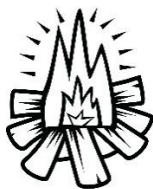
The Council has agreed to continue this conversation into the months to come, and as we do, to pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit. I invite you to be in prayer for us as a Council and as a congregation, as well. As a first step in this process, we have ordered an additional 20 copies of "Autopsy of a Deceased Church" and will soon have them available in the narthex for you to pick up, take home, and read. **I would very strongly encourage each and every member of Hope to read it and take the contents of this book seriously.** If we run out and you want a copy, let me know and I will personally see to it that you have one. The things we identify here will help guide the conversation and the changes that we need to make in the coming months to bring Hope Lutheran Church into a much better place as we look toward our future.

Having said this, I want to be up front with you, as I was with our Council this week: this will not be an easy task. This will not be something that you will see statistical changes with overnight, nor will it result in Hope being the same church it was in its past. This process will involve in some ways a complete change in our

congregational culture, in which we will be intentional in refocusing everything that takes place within Hope Lutheran Church around the Great Commission: go make disciples of all nations, starting right here in Rusk County. We will be refocusing everything that we do in this place around being and making disciples who follow Jesus Christ in all aspects of our lives. This may mean that some things we've done for many years that no longer serve that purpose may have to come to a conclusion, and doing this will be difficult. I was up front with our Council that by embarking on this journey, there will be some pain involved, and there may well be a prolonged period of time where we're not comfortable, because we may be asked to accept some significant change for the good of our congregation's mission and ministry moving forward. This will not be easy but it is a journey that is worth the pain, the change, and the difficult moments that lie ahead. Because, just as we heard from Jeremiah, there is hope for our future as we endure this momentary pain, struggle, and difficulty.

You see, at the end of the day, and at the end of this process, lies something powerful: a Hope Lutheran Church that is committed to being an Acts 2 type of church. A few weeks ago, in the lectionary reading from Acts 2:42-47, we saw what happened to the Christian church in the days after Pentecost. The church went out, shared the Gospel, and made disciples. They prayed together regularly. They did not neglect worship and God's Word, but held it sacred and gladly heard and learned it. They shared the good news of the Gospel with others and cared for one another in a genuine way. Their relationships with one another ran deep, firmly rooted in Christ as opposed to friendship with the world. And the last words of Acts 2 tell us as the Church focused on disciple-making: "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47) You notice as you read Acts 2 that this didn't happen with certain programs, attractional worship, technology, buildings, gimmicks, social clubs, personal preferences, or anything else. This simply happened by a focus on discipleship. Word and Sacrament ministry. Living out the Great Commission in its life. Nothing more. Nothing Less. Can you imagine in five years, when we celebrate Hope's 125th Anniversary, what we have to look forward to, if we simply let go of the control and in some ways "the way we've always done things" and let the Holy Spirit take root, and transform us into an Acts 2 type of community? The possibilities are endless, and the rewards will take you by surprise!

I am convinced that God still has plans for a hope and future for Hope Lutheran Church. Like the Israelites, it won't be the future that our past was like, but it will be an exciting future nonetheless! Please join with me in praying for this renewal through the power of the Holy Spirit to happen in our lives at Hope, for the courage to embrace the change we need, and to let go of the need to control the outcome, and allow the Holy Spirit to use Hope Lutheran Church in the ways He sees fit so that we might become a disciple-making community that reaches out with the transformative, life-giving power of Jesus Christ to Rusk County, one life at a time.



Campfire Worship

We'll be worshipping around the campfire on Wednesdays, June 28, July 26, and August 23 at 6:30pm. The Worship & Music Committee will provide hot dogs, buns, chips, s'mores, and water. Attendees are asked to bring lawn chairs. Everyone is welcome!

Adult Education & Fellowship

Sunday Morning Study: The study on the book of Revelation will continue on Sunday, June 4 at 10:30am in the Fireside Room.

Book Discussion: The book group will meet on Sunday, June 18 at 10:30am to discuss When the Meadow Blooms by Ann H. Gabhart.

Ephesians 6 Study: Lindsay Martin is leading a study on Ephesians 6 entitled "The Armor of God" on Fridays in June at 2:00pm. If you are interested in an evening Bible study, please sign up on the Parish Education bulletin board.

Meal of the Month: The June Meal of the Month will take place on Friday, June 9 at 4:30pm at the LO Bar (formerly the Pickled Gill). This is an opportunity for members to enjoy a meal and time of fellowship while supporting a local business.



Hope Lutheran Church Women



Monthly Meeting: The HLCW will hold their monthly meeting on Thursday, June 15 at 9:30am. All women of Hope are welcome!

Quilting: The quilting group will meet on Tuesday, June 27 beginning at 9:00am. 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. Questions? Contact Karen Skeels (715-452-5444).

Farmer's Market Booth

Hope Lutheran will again have a presence at the Ladysmith Farmers' Market on Saturdays from June 10 to October 7. We are looking for volunteers to set-up and/or greet customers on Saturday mornings from 7:45am-12:30pm. We are also in need of people to provide crafts, garden produce, or baked goods to sell at the booth. Per regulations, food items should not include pumpkin, squash, cream pies, cheesecake, freezer jams, or anything that would need to be kept refrigerated. We can sell garden produce, crafts, jewelry, plants, etc., that are grown or made by members of Hope families. All proceeds will be used to fund Hope's GriefShare participant workbooks, as well as equal donations to other area non-profit organizations. A sign-up sheet for booth volunteers and bakers can be found on the Congregational Care & Outreach bulletin board. If you have questions, please contact Karen Langland (715-595-4224) or Aileen Tauchen (715-532-7116). If bakers would like the committee to make ingredient labels for their products, they should text their recipe to 715-492-1409.

Musicians Wanted

We are looking for individuals or groups willing to provide special music (either vocal or instrumental) at worship during the summer months. If you would be willing, please contact Lisa Borman (715-415-1806).

Summer Youth Events

Grades 6-12

Donuts & Devotions: Youth are invited to the upstairs youth room for Donuts & Devotions on Sunday, June 11 and August 20 immediately following the 9:00am worship service.

Mini Mission Trip: On Saturday, June 24 youth will be traveling to the Twin Cities to pack meals for Feed My Starving Children. Following the packing event, youth will spend the afternoon at Valley Fair. Youth should meet at the church at 6:15am and will return to the church around 10:00pm. If you have not already signed up or if you have questions, please contact Julie Kammerud.

Root Beer Float Fundraiser: Youth Ministry will be holding a Root Beer Float fundraiser on Sunday, July 16 to raise funds to purchase items for NALC Disaster Relief Flood Buckets. Watch for more information.

Flood Bucket Assembly: Following Donuts & Devotions on Sunday, August 20, youth will gather to assemble Flood Buckets for the NALC Disaster Response.

Thank You! Thank you to everyone who took the time to help support the youth of the church through the soup suppers, corned beef dinner, pie auction, and Easter breakfast. Your time and generosity were greatly appreciated. - Youth Ministry Committee



Vacation Bible School will be a one-day event on Wednesday, July 19. Please watch the Sunday bulletins and the July newsletter for more information. If you would like to help in any way with VBS, please contact Jana Nyhagen or a member of the Parish Education Committee.

Summary of Council & Committee Action

Parish Agreement: The Parish Board, consisting of two members of each church council, along with Pastor Martin, met on April 27, 2023 to discuss recommendations for the percentage Glen Flora pays to Hope Lutheran for shared pastoral services. The Parish Board recommended the following:

- 1) Discontinue the "Parsonage Assessment" to Glen Flora, effective January 1, 2024.
- 2) Discontinue including estimated Parsonage Utilities in the Joint Pastoral Expenses (currently including parsonage fuel, electricity, and water/garbage), effective January 1, 2024.
- 3) Recommend that the ratio of Joint Pastoral Ministry Expenses be adjusted to: Hope 75%, Glen Flora 25%, effective January 1, 2024. The following items will be included in calculating this ratio: Base salary, housing equity pension, pension contribution, medical and fringe benefits, continuing education, official meetings, car allowance, and social security allowance.

A joint meeting of the Councils of Hope and Glen Flora Lutheran Churches was held on May 17, 2023. The Joint Council voted unanimously to approve the changes.

Congregational Care & Outreach: The Farmers Market booth will begin June 10. Seeking volunteers. GriefShare will resume in the fall. The first Marriage Enrichment group had 18 participants. Next meeting: June 13 at 3:00pm.

Parish Education: VBS will be held July 19. "Spring Fling" events had six children at the first event and four at the second. Lindsay Martin will be leading a Bible study on Fridays. Next meeting: June 6 at 5:30pm.

Property: Did not meet. Next meeting: June 13 at 6:00pm.

Service & Fellowship: Working on plans for a float for the Northland Mardi Gras parade on July 23. Next meeting: June 7 at 1:00pm.

Social Ministries: Missions and benevolence funds were designated for Power House Youth Center, Lutheran World Relief-World Hunger, and Nature's Edge Therapy Center. Next meeting: June 13 at 4:00pm.

Stewardship & Finance: Discussed funding sources for the soffit repair project. Next meeting: June 6 at 5:30pm.

Worship & Music: Campfire services will be held on Wednesday, June 28, July 26, and August 23 at 6:30pm. Hot dogs, chips, and s'mores will be provided by the committee. Next meeting: June 6 at 6:00pm.

Youth Ministry: Eight youth are signed up for the Mini Mission Trip scheduled for June 24. Planning events for the summer months. Next meeting: June 5 at 5:45pm.

Next Council Meeting: June 20 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 on Monday, June 5 & 19 at 9:15am to help unload the Feed My People delivery and stock food pantry 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").

MANNA Meal

The June MANNA Meal will take place on Thursday, June 29 with serving from 5:00-6:00pm. This is a free meal providing food and fellowship to those in needs. This month's meal is sponsored by St. John's Lutheran Church.

"The righteous who walks in his integrity—blessed are his children after him!"

Proverbs 20:7



Deadlines...

Items for the weekly bulletin are due in the church office no later than noon on Wednesday. We will be doing a combined July/August newsletter. Items for the July/August issue are due no later than Tuesday, June 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 send it 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 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



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|----|--------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | Scott & Mary Kauphusman | 18 | Jim & Diane Doke |
| 2 | Lynnette & Tom Jenness | | Jerry & Pat McEathron |
| | Nick & Heidi Jo Sovacool | | Randy & Jana Nyhagen |
| 5 | Dan & Cheryl Petrus | 20 | Tony & Nicole Swanson |
| | Cindy & John Pohlman | | Terry & Cathy Tappon |
| 6 | Allie & Morris Clark | 21 | Al & Rose Warwick |
| 8 | Kirk & Erin Konichek | 22 | Lyndee & Adam Salo |
| 11 | Dave & Lisa Borman | 23 | Sean & Melissa Lacey |
| 12 | Jeff & Rosemary Johnson | 24 | Scott & Dee Peterson |
| 15 | Tobey & Greg Krisik | 25 | Megan & Dustin Kimber |
| | Lance & Kari Mulholland | | Doug & Jenn Titera |
| 16 | Dan & Sarah Solberg | 27 | George & Marcia Calkins |



You're Invited

Nicholas Sovacool and his family invite their church family to celebrate his high school graduation on Saturday, June 10 from 1:00-4:00pm at the Beachview Pavilion at Memorial Park.

Bible Movies at the Miner

The Miner Theatre will be again offering admission-free showings of several Sight & Sound Theatres Bible movies during the summer months. Doors will open at 5:00pm with the movies starting at 6:00pm. Concessions will be available for sale and a free-will offering will be received.

June 14 – Samson
July 12 – Queen Esther
August 9 - Jesus



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1 | Samantha Debroux | 15 | Bonnie Billings |
| 3 | Solveig Anderson | | Zach Lee |
| | Karalee Krisik | 16 | Kyle Craker |
| 4 | Greg Stohr | | Stevie Lacey |
| 5 | Susan vanDoorn | | Cheryl Petrus |
| 6 | Carla Closs | 17 | Marilyn Kulibert |
| | Emily Peterson | | Cortlen Stanton |
| | Gerard Schueller | 18 | Azrael Narvaez |
| | Irene Titera | | Caleb Towberman |
| 7 | Sandra Brooks | 20 | Jan Hyde |
| | Karen Langland | | Tucker Konichek |
| | Olivia Mincoff | | Jordan Shineflew |
| | Chad Nisbit | 21 | Jean Raymond |
| | Dakota Thompson | 22 | Max Kauphusman |
| | Emmersyn Usher | | Lacey McGinn |
| 9 | Jace Peterson | 23 | Lisa Congemi |
| | Kevin Segebrecht | | Clark James |
| | Doug Towberman | | Jubilee Lauterborn |
| 10 | Donovan Buchholz | | Burt Zielke |
| | Jeff Carey | 25 | Kelli Vetterkind |
| | Kayla Coggins | 26 | Al Plath |
| | Matt Loser | | Vicki Richardson |
| | Jared Rausch | 29 | Chase Hillman |
| 12 | Marie Bentley | 30 | Jared Diekman |
| | Gayleen Duzy | | |
| | Lois MacArthur | | |
| 14 | Jim Kenyon | | |
| | Brady Polak | | |
| | Lance Schwaller | | |
| | Joel Solsrud | | |
| | Wayne Tappon | | |





June Worship Assistants

4	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst.	Dave Borman, Rosemary Johnson Linda Campbell Linda Campbell
11	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst.	Dave Borman, Charlie Holtebeck Irene Titera Chris Holtebeck
18	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst.	Don & Judy Soyring Linda Campbell Irene Titera
25	Ushers Lector Comm. Asst.	Nick Sovacool, Aileen Tauchen Jana Nyhagen Bradon Martin

Prayer Concerns

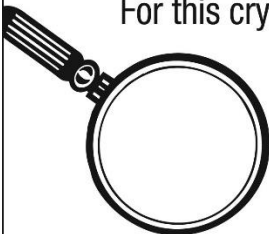
If you have asked to have someone listed in the prayer concerns in the Sunday bulletins, please contact the church office (715-532-7739 or hlcladysmith@gmail.com) with periodic updates so that we can keep the list current. If we do not receive an update, the person will be removed from the list after one month.

Mission Statement

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

Puzzle!

For this cryptogram, use the clues to decode
Proverbs 3:5, NRSV.



CLUES:

Y = T, D = I



Y K T P Y D X Y J Z

V Q K R F D Y J O V V

C Q T K J Z O K Y, O X R

-----,

R Q X Q Y K Z V C Q X

C Q T K Q F X D X P D L J Y.

-----.

Answer: Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight. Proverbs 3:5, NRSV