



The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like...

*Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables;
without a parable he told them nothing. - Matthew 13:34*

For the last few weeks we've been studying Jesus' parables in the Gospel of Matthew. So far we have heard two different sower parables as we've reflected on our seeds and soils of faith and our likelihood to be more weed or wheat. This week we will hear a collection of further parables in Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52. The kingdom of heaven is compared to a mustard seed, hidden leaven, a treasure in a field, a pearl merchant, and a net full of fish. How on earth could all of these different things tell us anything about the kingdom of heaven?

Such is the gift of the parables. Each one gives us pause to ponder and wonder just *what exactly Jesus meant*. The reality is none of them mean any one thing. The purpose of a parable is to make us wonder and ask questions, and in doing so we simultaneously better understand God **and** find ourselves with even more questions! Dr. Amy Jill-Levine reminds us, "reducing parables to a single meaning destroys their aesthetic as well as ethical potential. This surplus of meaning is how poetry and storytelling work, and it is all to the good." Delving into these parables allows us the opportunity to share rich conversation about just who God is and what God's Kingdom is like. This Kingdom is not one of some far-away, after-we-die, only if we are good or holy enough, kind of "place." This Kingdom is what Jesus brought down to us, "The Kingdom of God *has come near* (Matthew 4:17). We have the ability to live as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, here and now.

What does that kingdom look like?

What does that feel like?

Or sound like? Or smell or taste like?

If you were to write your own account of the Kingdom of Heaven, what are the parables you would use? To what would you compare the kingdom of heaven to?

We may lose some of the power of Jesus' parables because we are not often found sowing seed, or planting wheat. You may not know much about a pearl merchant and perhaps it's been a while since you've kneaded sourdough. But you, in your life, where do you see tastes and samples of God's Kingdom?

Is it like a kid in a candy store, able to load up his goodie bag with no cost?

Or shall we compare the kingdom of heaven to a library- full of people and experiences and knowledge beyond what we could possibly learn in a lifetime?

Is it like the Kinnikinnick River? Home to heron and toad, and kayaker in need of rejuvenation?

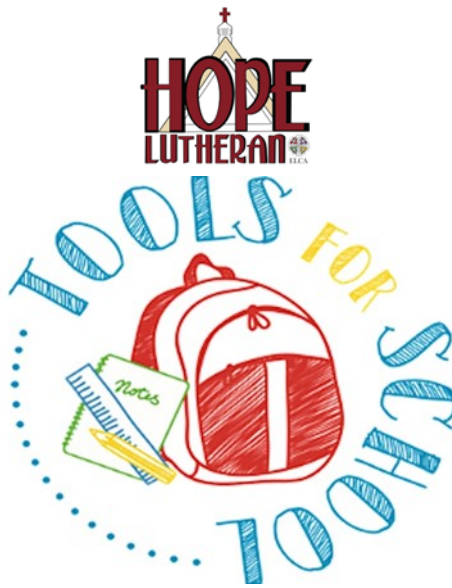
To what shall YOU compare the Kingdom of heaven?

Spend some time in holy devotion using your creativity to give story and parable to the Kingdom of heaven. I invite you to bring your thoughts with you this coming Sunday, July 30th as we continue our reflection on Jesus' parables.

In Christ's holy mystery,

Pastor Annie Ladnier

This Week at HOPE July 26, 2023



It's that time of year again! We are once again partnering with local congregations and businesses to sponsor this important annual community event!

All school supply donations are welcomed, but items listed below are of particular need for this year's collection:

- ♦ Backpacks
- ♦ Notebooks (wide and college ruled)
- ♦ Pencil Boxes
- ♦ Glue Sticks
- ♦ Washable markers (thin and wide)
- ♦ Pencils (Ticonderoga)
- ♦ Crayons
- ♦ Earbuds

The HOPE collection runs through **Monday, August 14th** (bin located inside sanctuary during the week/on table in WOTS on Sunday mornings).

In addition to your donations, please prayerfully consider donating your time to this wonderful event! Volunteers are needed to help set-up and to accompany students with their shopping and shoe selection! **K-12 volunteers are welcome but can only help with set-up and tear down, as this is a sensitive event for their peers!** All adults are welcome! You can sign-up to volunteer Sundays at worship OR by emailing Stacia Johnso, HOPE's liaison: staciarjohnson@gmail.com.

Volunteers are needed:

Monday, August 21st 10-11AM (set up help)

Monday, August 21st 4-7PM (accompany students)*

Tuesday, August 22nd 9:45AM- 12PM (accompany students)

**If this is your first time, please arrive at 3:30PM*

This Week at HOPE July 26, 2023



God's Work/Our Hands Sunday--Potluck

September 10 is our kick-off Sunday for remaining goals in the year. Membership and Congregational Life is asking you to contribute to a potluck that Sunday to be served outside in the Winds of the Spirit building.

If you bring hot food we can put it in the oven or plug in any crockpots outside inside WOTS. Beverages will be provided.

We look forward to the nourishment that enables us to complete projects designed by the Mission Ministry or Green Team.

We look forward to the fellowship on September 10.



The historic Kinnickinnic Church will hold its Annual Ice Cream Social on Sunday, August 6, from 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. in the churchyard. The church is less than a mile off Hwy. 65 on Cnty. Rd. J, near River Falls.

Ice cream, homemade pies, bars, cakes, and root beer floats, plus several beverages will be available. Live music will entertain while you socialize under the tents.

Proceeds support the 150+. year old church, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Check the Facebook page at Kinnickinnic

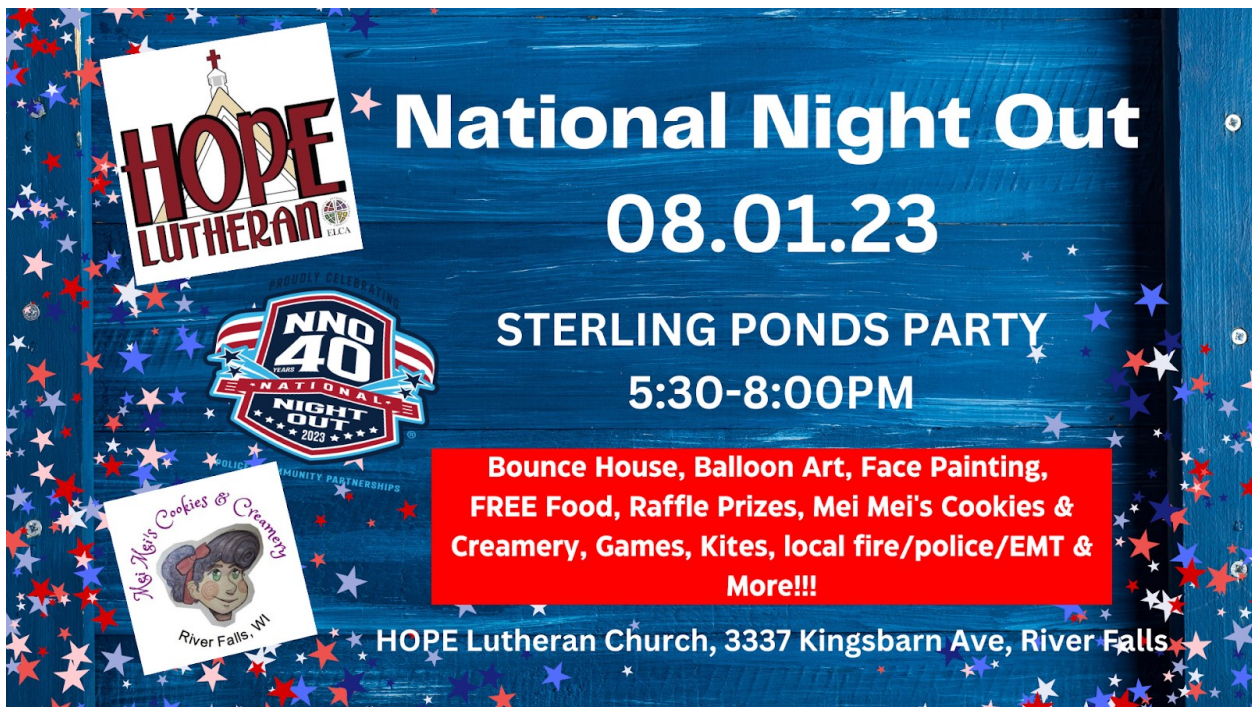
Upcoming Celebrations of Life

In sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we share the following upcoming Celebrations of Life for siblings of HOPE Lutheran:

Judy Karshbaum: Friday, July 28, 2023 from 2-5 pm at Bakken-Young Funeral & Cremation Services 805 E Division Street River Falls, WI.

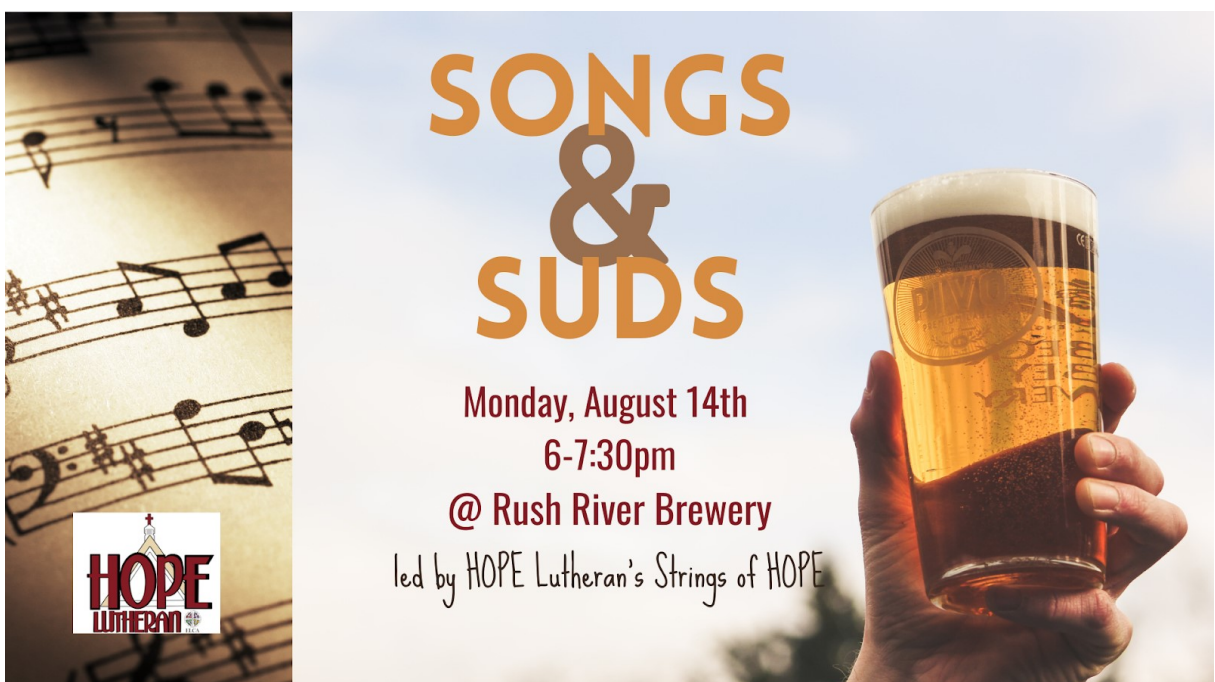
Bernie Brohaugh: A Visitation will be held on Saturday, August 5, 2023 at 10AM at *The Winds of the Spirit pavilion at HOPE Lutheran Church (3337 Kingsbarn Ave) in River Falls with a Celebration of Life service beginning at 11AM. A reception will follow the service.*

This Week at HOPE July 26, 2023



**This is our 4th year hosting National Night Out for our neighbors! All HOPE Ministry Teams make this event happen. Some additional volunteers are needed to make this night a success.
You can sign up to help [HERE!](#)**

**This is a FREE event, but we do accept donations for Turning Point: For Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence, Our Neighbor's Place, and the River Falls Food Pantry:
See the full list of Needed Donations [HERE](#)**



This Week at HOPE July 26, 2023



YOUTH NEWS



Wednesdays of Wonder

3rd Wednesdays This Summer!

July 19

6-8PM

**Outdoor Scavenger Hunt
with PRIZES!**

August 16

**End of Summer Campfire Celebration
Dinner included!**



**Cross Generational nights for interactive creativity,
fun, food, & fellowship!
ALL ARE WELCOME!**



**FREE
ADMISSION!**

A POOL PARTY WITH HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

08.05.23 | 6:15-7:30 PM | GLEN PARK POOL | ALL ARE WELCOME!

Treats provided!

This Week at HOPE July 26, 2023



Holy Yoga

FOR BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

WEDNESDAYS, 6:00PM

JUNE 07-AUG 30

Outdoor yoga, meditation, & reflection

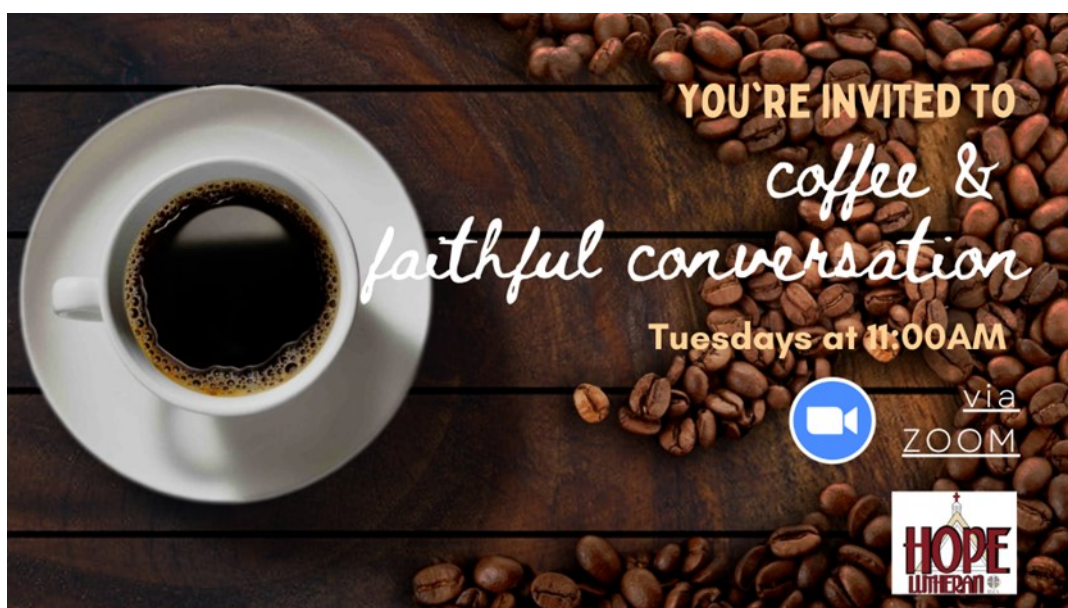
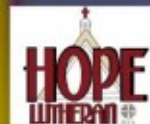
bring a yoga mat, water bottle, & yourself!

Cost: FREE WILL offering


3337 KINGSBARN AVE
WINDS OF THE SPIRIT PAVILLION


WHAT TO EXPECT:

- 45-60 minute session of beginning to intermediate yoga
- Use of Christian Scripture for grounding
- Reflective meditation/prayer exercises
- Feeling renewed!
- Joyfully gathering with others!
- Enjoying the beautiful landscape!



YOU'RE INVITED TO
coffee & faithful conversation
Tuesdays at 11:00AM

 via
ZOOM



This Week at HOPE July 26, 2023



All are invited to participate in the leading of worship!
Ushers, Communion Prep & Assistants, Readers, Prayer Leaders,
Fellowship Hosts, Special Music, Altar Flowers, & Worship Assistants
all add to the beauty of our worship together!
We can help you if this is your first time!
[YOU CAN SIGN UP HERE FOR ANY UPCOMING SUNDAY!](#)

This Week at HOPE July 26, 2023



THE WORLD When Jesus Lived

JULY 31-AUGUST 3, 2023 | 9:00-11:30 AM

AGE 3-COMPLETED GRADE 5



ALL ARE WELCOME! NO CHARGE

HOPE Lutheran kids will join kids from First Congregational UCC

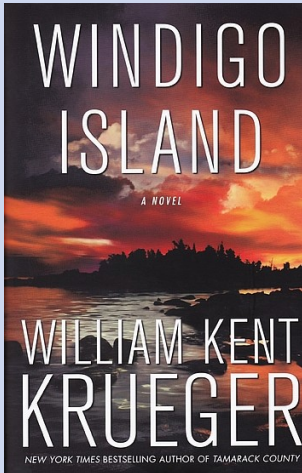
110 N 3RD ST. RIVER FALLS, WI | 715-425-2052

Register at: www.firstchurchrf.org



Upcoming Synod Summer Book Discussions

You are invited to join lay people, pastors, and deacons from across our Synod for thought-provoking conversation on these two books:



Windigo Island

By Willian Kent Krueger

July 26, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Lead by Pastor Diane
House

Click [HERE](#) for Zoom
link

Meeting ID: 847 5561
7233

When the body of a teenage Ojibwe girl washes up on the shore of an island in Lake Superior, the residents of the nearby Bad Bluff reservation whisper that it was the work of the mythical beast, the Windigo. But as soon as Cork O'Connor, former sheriff turned private investigator, starts asking questions about the girl and her missing fifteen-year-old friend, Mariah, no one will talk. Holding tight to his vow to find Mariah for her desperate family, Cork makes his way to the old port city of Duluth--a modern-day sex trafficking center. With only the barest hope of saving her from men whose darkness rivals that of the legendary Windigo, Cork prepares for an epic battle that will determine whether fear, or love, will truly



The Killing Moon

August 30, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Lead by Pastor Sara Villarreal
Bishop

Click [HERE](#) for Zoom
link

Meeting ID: 847 5561
7233

The story follows Ehiru, one of the most experienced Gatherers, as things go awry during one of his commissions. Despite his wish to serve a time of penance for his failure, Ehiru is ordered to gather a woman judged corrupt. It soon becomes clear that things are not what they seem: there's a conspiracy lurking at the heart of the Hetawa, shaking the very foundations of Ehiru's faith; more worrisome, though, is that someone is gathering souls in Gujaareh in both the waking and dreaming realm, but their departures look anything but peaceful. Accompanied by his apprentice, Nijiri, Ehiru must team up with the woman he was sent to kill in order to investigate.



Women's Cancer Support Group

River Falls

Join us

- Third Tuesday of every month
- 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- St. Bridget Catholic Church
211 East Division Street, River Falls

Gather with other women to share
encouragement and wisdom about
cancer and recovery.

This Week at HOPE July 26, 2023



Please lift up the following people in prayer

The Karshbaum Family
Dennis & Sandy Schultz (Friends of Bill & Kay Montgomery)
Karen Brohaugh and Family
Nancy Miller (Friend of Paula & Phil Klacan)
Family of Marc DuPaul (Nephew of Naomi Brandt)
Linda Shurden (Friend of Nancy Sailer)
Charli and Sam King (Friends of Faye Perkins)
David Anderson (Brother of Karen Brohaugh)
Family of Romeo Thompson
Joyce Kendall (Mother of Cara Getschel)
Richard Burns (Grandfather of Luke & Jack Stang)
Judy Branson (Relative of the Boocks)
Hannah Forward
Amanda Olson (Olive Olson's daughter)
Jerry Gibson (Diane Clark and Karen Rodewald's father)
Ella Conover (Niece of Phil & Paula Klacan)
Laura McDonald (Sister of Jean Loudon)
Mary Babler (Friend the Dan Malaney)
Beth Lindgren (Sister-in-law Dan Malaney)
Betty Lou Oppegard
Anna Peterson's Family (Friend of Olive Olson)
Daryl Kleeman (brother of Darcy Boock)
Naomi Brandt and family
Milo Oppegard
Carin Perkins (Faye Perkins sister)
David Boock (Relative of the Boocks)
Nicholas Simpson (Boock family friend)
Linda Hidding (Nancy Sailer's cousin)
Teajai Schmidt (Boock family friend)
Rev. Sarah Mayer-Flatt (Friend of Pastor Annie)
Lee Hill (friend of Naomi Brandt)
Judy Karshbaum
Gary Siebold
David Hendrickson
Jon Boyce
Jay and Jeri Jorgenson (friends of the Bohnerts)

This Week at HOPE July 26, 2023



July Birthdays

Name	Date
Tessa VanOverbeke	3-Jul
Janet Gerber	7-Jul
Bill Warner	7-Jul
Ross VanOverbeke	7-Jul
Lucas Ladnier	11-Jul
Danielle Tokheim	15-Jul
Betty Lou Oppegard	16-Jul
William Berndt	18-Jul
Luke Stang	18-Jul
Jon Filarsky	21-Jul
Piper Rodewald	22-Jul
Erin Nelson	23-Jul
Payton Torntore	24-Jul
Joseph McIntosh	25-Jul
Steve Leitch	28-Jul
Nancy Peters	30-Jul

July Baptisms

- Will Bohnert
- Alyssa Boock
- Andrea Boock
- Denise Burkett
- Peter Nelson
- Milo Oppegard
- Elizabeth Rodewald
- Eric Rodewald
- Hunter Rodewald
- Douglas Rudesill
- Ross VanOverbeke
- Spencer Ziebarth



July Anniversaries	Date	Celebrating Years
Jerry & Darcy Boock	03-Jul	47
Phillip & Paula Klacan	20-Jul	38
John & Karen Hamilton	26-Jul	32
Robb & Kathy Scott	25-Jul	31
Marc & Martie Guthrie	25-Jul	26
Jason & Hallie Neuhaus	10-Jul	19
Mitch & Erin Nelson	13-Jul	16



First Sunday of the Month Special Collections

The River Falls School District has 112 children signed up for the Backpack Program this year. This program falls under the auspices of Our Neighbors' Place and is primarily funded by The Black Tie Affair held every April and donations. It does not receive any help from the River Falls Food Pantry.

Therefore, the Mission Ministry through HOPE would like to start collecting donations for the Backpack Program on the first Sunday of each month alternating with the Food Pantry.

The Magic Box works in the same manner as for the Food Pantry, whereas each dollar magically will have \$5 of purchasing power. The next opportunity will be November 6, when your generous donations will support the Backpack Program.

First Sunday of the Month Special Collections Schedule

2023

January 1	Backpack Program
February 5	Food Pantry
March 5	Backpack Program
April 2	Food Pantry
May 7	Backpack Program
June 4	Food Pantry
July 2	Backpack Program
August 6	Food Pantry
September 3	Backpack Program
October 1	Food Pantry
Nov 5	Backpack Program
December 3	Food Pantry