



How does a weary world rejoice?

We trust our
belovedness

This Sunday marks the end of our Advent & Christmas season and our exploration of “How Does A Weary World Rejoice?” I pray it has offered you the gifts of hope, peace, joy, love, and resiliency in the midst of a world so often drenched in weariness.

As we gather this week we celebrate two important Feast Days of the Church Year! January 6th is Epiphany and January 7th is Baptism of Our Lord. Throughout Advent we have been engaged in Luke’s narrative. On these days we typically explore Matthew and Mark’s versions of the story. Luke omits the magi’s visit and revelation of just who Jesus is, which Matthew so infamously recounts in his second chapter. Mark omits the entire birth narrative and jumps right into the heart of Jesus’ ministry with the proclamation of John the Baptist and Jesus’ baptism. In order to bring our Advent and Christmas seasons to their culmination, we will hear Luke’s account of Jesus’ baptism this week. The One whom Mary sang about, is here! The one to cast the mighty down from their thrones and uplift the humble of heart now emerges from the baptismal waters and God calls him *beloved*.

In Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection, you also have been adopted into that belovedness. No matter what, God looks at you, and calls ***you beloved***, too.

How do we, like the magi, live our lives in a way that reveals that kind of belovedness?

How do we reveal God’s very presence in a weary world?

How might we shine the love and light of Christ into our weary world?

As Advent and Christmas come to a close, a new season begins: Epiphany! Epiphany signifies the beginning of Jesus Christ’s work of manifesting God. It testifies to the whole purpose of the incarnation, which is the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ beginning not just with his birth but especially with his baptism! (In fact, Christmas is a newer festival day, not appearing until about 336 CE). The mighty signs and teachings we discover in the Gospels tell the story of Jesus accomplishing this manifestation, which ultimately culminates in the final events in Jerusalem leading to his death and resurrection. We mark this particular season of time between Christmas and Lent by exploring this manifestation known as *Epiphany*.

May these next six weeks provide you a multitude of opportunities to experience Christ manifest in and through your life!

Pastor Annie Ladnier



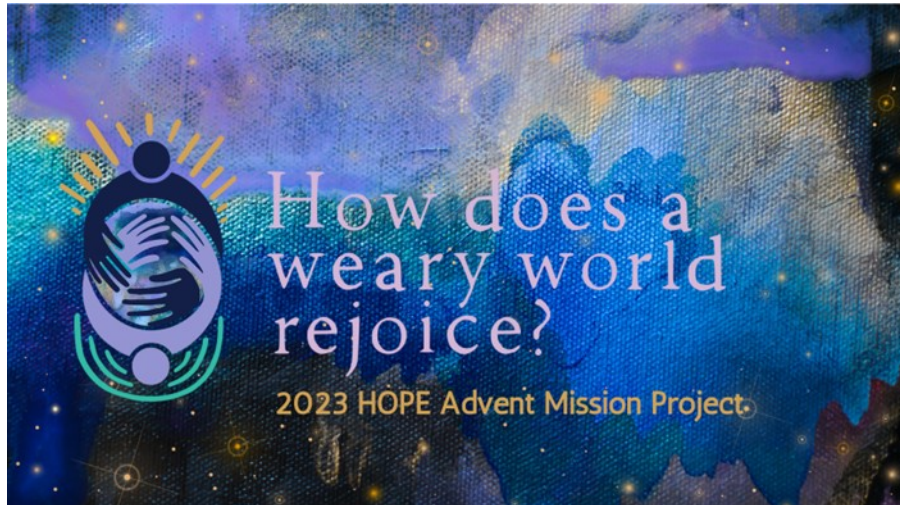
Baptism of the Lord | How does a weary world rejoice?

We trust our belovedness

The Bravest Thing We Can Do

Trust your belovedness.
Let it be a protest,
an act of resistance,
a song of celebration.
Trust your belovedness in a world
that is rarely satisfied.
Wear it like a badge of honor.
Speak it as confidently as your last name.
Tattoo it to your heart.
When outside forces
chip away at your sense of self,
when life asks you
to hand over the keys,
remember the water.
Remember creation.
Remember how it was *good*,
so very good.
Let that truth hum through your veins.
Sing it so loud
that it drowns out the weariness of the world,
for the bravest thing we can ever do
is trust that we belong here.

This Week at HOPE January 3, 2024



ONE MORE DAY!!!

HOPE's Mission Ministry will continue to collect pillows and pillowcases (as many as possible) for Grace Place **through January 4, 2024**. Likewise, items for the Person Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief will be collected through January 4.

Our goal is to prepare 24 kits for the 24 days of Advent! Please refer to the [Google Drive document that shows what items have been donated thus far and what are still needed.](#) After church on January 7, you will all have the opportunity to help put these kits together for people in need throughout the world!

To put together an entire kit on your own or with your family, [CLICK HERE](#)
Thank you for your support in these projects.

Thanks,
HOPE Mission Ministry Team



SAVE THE DATE:

2024 ANNUAL MEETING & CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY

Mark your calendars for Sunday, January 21, 2024 after worship!

All are invited to bring a dish for a Potluck Meal as we celebrate another fantastic year of doing God's work here at HOPE!

This Week at HOPE January 3, 2024



All are needed 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!

[YOU CAN SIGN UP HERE FOR ANY UPCOMING SUNDAY!](#)

SPECIAL 2024 HELPERS NEEDED!

There are two worship volunteer roles that work on a monthly schedule.

Volunteers for these roles are encouraged to sign-up for an entire month at a time:

[COMMUNION BREAD BAKER SIGN-UP](#)

[COMMUNION SET-UP/ALTAR GUILD SIGN-UP](#)

This Week at HOPE January 3, 2024



**ALL CONGREGATION MEMBERS & FRIENDS ARE INVITED TO BE
Snack Hosts
FOR OUR WINTER SESSION OF WOH!**

This is a great way to connect with our younger families here at HOPE!
Snack hosts need to provide a simple snack and drink for about 20 participants
Consider teaming up with a friend and checking out our Wednesday evenings!
Help make Wednesdays of HOPE a safe, engaging, and welcoming time for all!



This Week at HOPE January 3, 2024



YOUTH NEWS



WINTER SESSION BEGINS JANUARY 10TH 2024! ALL ARE WELCOME

All K-10th+* grade youth are invited to join us on Wednesday evenings from 6-7PM for fellowship, family friendly worship & service, learning, and growing in relationship to Jesus and one another! Our evenings begin with a brief family style worship, where children & adults help with leadership and a true sense of community is fostered. Youth are then divided into elementary (Faith Adventures) and middle/high (Confirmation) classes for deeper engagement with the evening's themes.

If you have not already done so, you can register for the Winter session here:
[2023-2024 Wednesdays of HOPE Registration](#)

Teachers and Snack Hosts are needed to make each night of Wednesdays of HOPE a safe, engaging, and welcoming time for all! Please consider sharing your time and gifts to help! Sign-up at the links above or contact Pastor Annie!

This Week at HOPE January 3, 2024



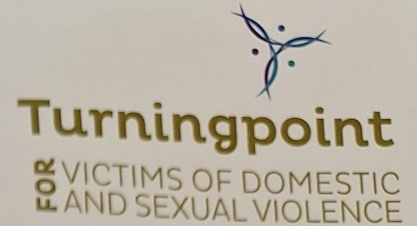
Teachers and Snack Hosts
ARE NEEDED for the Winter and Spring Sessions!
Help make Wednesdays of HOPE
a safe, engaging, and welcoming time for all!

Please consider sharing your time and gifts to help!
Sign-up at the links above or
contact Pastor Annie for more information!



December, 2023

Pastor Annie Ladnier
HOPE Lutheran Church
3337 Kingsbarn Ave
River Falls, WI 54022



Dear Pastor Annie:

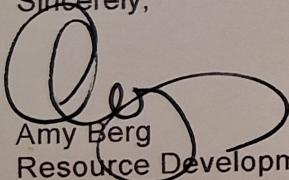
On behalf of Turningpoint, thank you very much for your recent donation in the amount of \$1,000.00. We are very grateful for your gift, which will support general operations of Turningpoint. Services include our 24-hour phone and text crisis hotlines, crisis shelter, legal system support, one-on-one emotional support, safety planning, systems advocacy, children's programming, support groups, and emergency food, clothing, and transportation. *Thank you.*

Turningpoint's vision is to eliminate domestic and sexual violence in Pierce and St. Croix Counties of Wisconsin—our service delivery area. Your thoughtful gift helps us toward that goal and makes a meaningful difference in supporting victims of violence and their families.

If you have questions about our work, please visit our website at turningpoint-wi.org, or contact me directly at 715-425-6751, ext. 102.

Again, thank you very much for this generous and thoughtful gift.

Sincerely,



Amy Berg
Resource Development Director

Turningpoint for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this gift. This donation may be tax deductible.

Turningpoint's Federal Tax ID is 39-1322995.

We recommend you retain this letter for your tax records.

*Thank you so much for
this generous support!*

Turningpoint for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence, Inc.
Box 304, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-6751 Main
715-425-5104 crisis hotline
715-425-6008 fax

**Safety.
Support
Strength.**



A Simpler, Humbler, and Bolder Church¹

Dear Members and Friends of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

It is time for your congregation's annual meeting! This is a great opportunity to reflect on the past year of faithful ministry. Now is the time to ask the BIG questions! How were we faithful in ministry? How were we faithful in participating in God's simple mission to love our neighbor? Now is the time to celebrate how God's Spirit has inspired your ministry! Give thanks to God and celebrate for the good that your congregation has accomplished!

Now is also the time to tell the truth about your ministry. How has your congregation fallen short and not been faithful to God's will? Lacked energy, a sense of purpose or mission? Now is the time to humbly tell the truth if your congregation has lost its focus or has little energy for God's work.

We all need to take an honest look in the rear view mirror of the last year and ask how have we been faithful and how have we failed to be faithful to our baptismal promises. Then we can boldly move into the New Year 2024 asking how we can with God's help do better.

The Church of England took a long look into the rear view mirror and with much prayer has discerned that moving forward they will strive to be a Simpler, Humbler and Bolder Church in the future. The Church of England described their vision for the future in this way:

Simpler, humbler, bolder are virtues we believe God is calling from us at this point in our history. They run through the vision and shape all we do and all that we are.

- **Simpler** because we are not as big a church as we used to be
- **Humbler** because we are facing our failures, and this is not easy.
- **Bolder** because the love of Christ compels us. We have a gospel to proclaim, and we live and minister in a world of much pain and confusion.

I believe these three virtues could also help us in the coming year. I invite your councils and leaders to lean into these questions in 2024:

1. **Simpler:** How can we simplify our structure so more time and energy can be spent on loving our neighbors and joining in God's mission in our community? How can we focus on what is really important and let go of the trivial or unnecessary?
2. **Humbler:** What isn't working? How have we fallen short? We can't do everything we use to do so what ONE thing can we do for Jesus? How can we work with other churches, denominations in our community?
3. **Bolder:** How can your congregation be braver and bolder in sharing the good news about Jesus in a hurting world? In prophetic witness to justice issues in our world? In working for right relationships with our neighbors and all of creation?

Friends, I am truly grateful for your partnership in the gospel and all the ways you are faithful in ministry. I invite you to move joyfully, simply, humbly and boldly into God's future in 2024.
Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

Philippians 2 *Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God... emptied himself... he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.*

I thank my God for every remembrance of you, always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:3-6

¹ [Jesus Christ Centred and Shaped | The Church of England](#) (accessed December 22, 2023)



FROM THE GREEN TEAM...

Christmas lights recycling is now
available at HOPE!



Lights can be deposited in
the labeled bin in the entry

Dec. 17, 2023 - Jan. 31, 2024

And remember, you can always recycle your plastic films
and batteries!

AND THANK YOU FOR HELPING US CONTINUE TO GROW
"GREENER" AS A CONGREGATION - YOUR GENEROUS GIFTS
WILL ENABLE US TO GROW FROM PURCHASING 31
RENEWABLE ENERGY BLOCKS IN 2023 TO 34 REB IN 2024.
A WONDERFUL START TO THE NEW YEAR!



This Week at HOPE January 3, 2024



All are invited to join Pastor Annie for this weekly small group conversation and Bible study!

This is a great chance to grow in relationship with God and one another.

We meet via Zoom so all can join from wherever you are!

This Week at HOPE January 3, 2024



Mark Bondhus
Wendy Tokheim
Lisa Ryland
Karen Rodewald
Susan Schuettpelz
Bruce Schuettpelz
Greta Wunrow
Jason Neuhaus



Hallie Neuhaus	1-Jan
Jill Fritz	3-Jan
Hannah Hoglo	3-Jan
Teegan Johnson	6-Jan
Katherine (Klacan) Schilling	11-Jan
Camryn Glaubitz	11-Jan
Mary Thompson	13-Jan
Jan Malaney	15-Jan
Connie Juaire	16-Jan
Samantha Brill	18-Jan
Sydney Wolfe	19-Jan
Lexy Getschel	21-Jan
Mason Shea	21-Jan
Sean James	22-Jan
Makayla Ziebarth	23-Jan
Amanda Ziebarth	28-Jan
Jeremy Wolfe	31-Jan

This Week at HOPE January 3, 2024



Please lift up the following people in prayer

David Anderson (Karen Brohaugh's brother)
Faye Perkins and family
Eden Annoye (Relative of Debra James)
John Weller (Karen Brohaugh's cousin)
Ken Jones Family (Martie Guthrie 's father)
Dave and Deb Haugen (Family of Ellen Roose)
Phyllis and Tom Haugen (Family of Ellen Roose)
John and Lisa Davis (Friends of Dale & Jan Wegleitner)
Fatma Aljarrah (Friend of Faye Perkins)
Lorraine Brask Family (Mother of Karen Kaste)
Beth Lindgren Family (Dan Malaney)
Betty Lou Oppegard and Family
Michael Jacobson (Brother of Linda Jacobson)
Barb Carmichael (Friend of Nancy Sailer)
Dennis & Sandy Schultz (Friends of Bill & Kay Montgomery)
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)
Joyce Kendall (Mother of Cara Getschel)
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)
Mary Babler (Friend the Dan Malaney)
Daryl Kleeman (brother of Darcy Boock)
Naomi Brandt and family
David Boock (Relative of the Boocks)
Nicholas Simpson (Boock family friend)
Teajai Schmidt (Boock family friend)
Rev. Sarah Mayer-Flatt (Friend of Pastor Annie)
Lee Hill (friend of Naomi Brandt)
Gary Siebold
David Hendrickson