



# **Mission & Values**

## **MISSION**

**HOPE is called by God to look beyond ourselves.  
We walk together in faith,  
treasuring all people and sharing with them  
the love, hope and acceptance that is in Christ.**

## **HOPE VALUES**

**All people without exception  
Serving Generously  
Spiritual Nourishment  
Our Connection with Creation**

## WEEKLY WORD: This Week's Poetry and Art



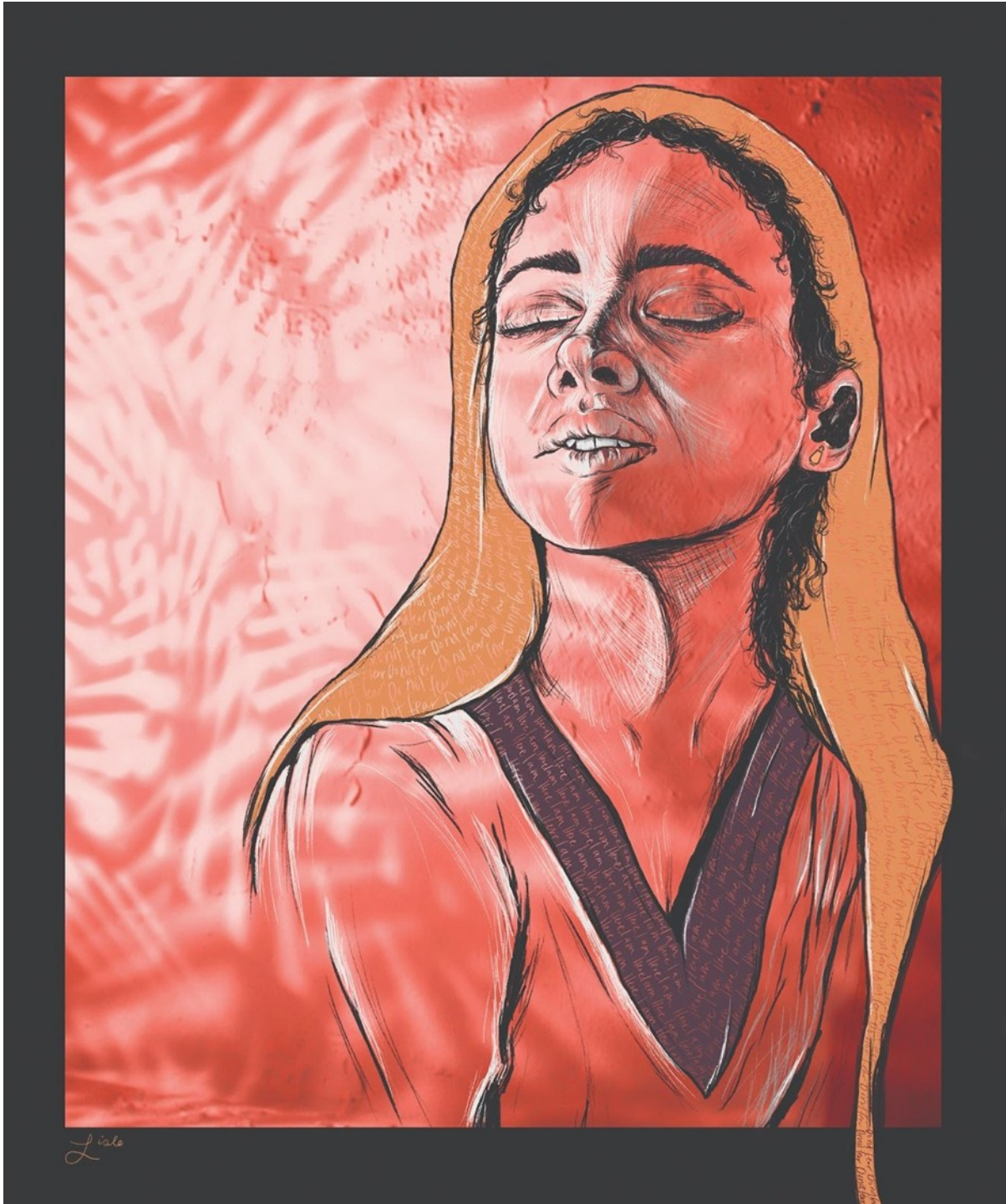
The Third Sunday of Advent | What do you fear?  
EVEN IN OUR FEAR, WE ARE CALLED FORWARD

### The First Step

Watch any parent. It starts with the first step.  
They kneel down. They smile with anticipation.  
They reach for their baby, calling and cooing them forward.  
And then before they know it, they're running behind a bike. They're yelling,  
*"Keep pedaling! You got it! I'm right here!"* And they're jumping up and down,  
because that little red helmet passed the mailbox.  
And then, just like that, they're driving circles in the church parking lot.  
They're giving instructions about easing on and off the pedal.  
They're having conversations about curfew and heartbreak.  
And then, before they know it, they're standing in a hospital room.  
Their heart is bursting. And they say, *"Put her head right here.  
Rock her gently. Do you remember the nursery rhymes?  
You were born for this."*

The first step is always the hardest,  
but you, beloved, were born for this.

Written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed



"Mary's Yes" by Lisle Gwynn Garrity. *Photography with digital drawing*

# This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025



## Additional Resources to Guide Your Advent

Make sure to pick up your:  
**ADVENT DEVOTIONAL and ADVENT CALENDAR**  
(available on back table in Sanctuary beginning this Sunday!)

OR

This DIGITAL DEVOTIONAL: [online.flippingbook.com/view/361593675/](https://online.flippingbook.com/view/361593675/)

In order to protect their work, please refrain from sharing this link or posting it on social media.

### Love Music?

Help prepare your heart for the season and spend some time in devotion with this specialized [“What Do You Fear” Advent Playlist](#) on Spotify

### Want to Dig Deeper in Learning?

Here are 2 additional devotionals/books that will enhance your experience

1. *Calling All Angels: An Advent Study of Fearlessness and Strength*, by Erin Wathen. (Louisville, KY:Westminster John Knox Press, 2024).

(Note: This Advent study written by pastor Erin Wathen includes many of the same scriptures as the ones in our series and studies them through the lens of the “do not fear” refrain. Her reflections tend to focus on cultivating “fearlessness,” whereas our resources take a slightly different approach of acknowledging and transforming our fears. However, her writings and worship liturgies would make a great companion to our materials throughout the season.)

2. *Hope: A User’s Manual*, by MaryAnn McKibben Dana (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2022).

(Note: In this book, pastor MaryAnn McKibben Dana argues that hope is too often sentimentalized and white-washed in Christian spaces. In response, she provides a practical manual that defines what hope is and how to sustain it throughout our lives. Sermon themes will resonate with this book throughout the series).

**This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025**

# Midweek Gatherings

Wednesdays in Advent

**December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

5:45 Meal, 6:30 Holden Evening Prayer

**December 10<sup>th</sup>**

5:45 Meal, 6:30 Learning Presentation

**December 17<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 Songs & Suds Christmas @ Rush River Brewing



A time of meal fellowship, worship,  
learning, and singing!

## **THIS WEEK:**

Join us at Rush River Brewing for our 3rd Annual Songs & Suds: Christmas! Bring 3 items for the food pantry and receive a free pint of your favorite beverage!

Some of the most needed items right now at the Food Pantry are: Cereal

Toothpaste

paper towels

Cooking oils

Peanut butter

mac & cheese

Tuna

Rice

baby formula and baby food

seasonings

**This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025**



You're Invited to  
**Christmas Eve  
Worship**  
Wednesday, December 24th  
4:00pm  
GOOD NEWS IS LOUDER THAN FEAR



CHRISTMAS PJ &  
BREAKFAST  
CHURCH  
12.28.25 | 9:30AM | SANCTUARY

**You're invited to a comfy, cozy, and yummy worship service on December 28th!**

**Everyone needs a break after the big holiday!  
So pop on your comfy clothes, and come hungry as we celebrate the first Sunday of Christmas!**

# This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025

## ***“What Do You Fear? Insisting on Hope This Advent”.***

The Mission Ministry team is announcing this year’s Advent Theme/Project: “What Do You Fear? Insisting on Hope This Advent”. Advent is from November 30th through Christmas Eve. We will continue the project through Epiphany (January 6th).

We will use the theme to concentrate each week on one thing people may fear in our area or in our world, however, items can be brought to the church throughout Advent.

**Week 1: Nov. 30** – God is always with us: Fear for safety – Turning Point family donations (actually starting one week earlier to allow for more time to shop and take advantage of Black Friday deals — see below)

On Sunday Nov. 23 the giving tree will be set up in the sanctuary with paper ornaments that list items specified for the adopted family from Turning for their Christmas. This is in coordination with the Education and Mission Ministry teams. Our family consists of a mom and 6 children from 1-16 yrs old. These items need to be brought to the church along with the ornament, so we know which child or mom the gift is meant for. The unwrapped gifts will then be delivered by the Confirmation students to Turning Point by Dec. 15. **Thank you for taking ALL of the ornaments! Please make sure to return your gifts by Dec. 14th!**

**Week 2: Dec. 7** – Signs of Hope are all around us: Fear of being unfairly targeted - speaker Lidixe Montoya, Neighbor to Neighbor (either Sunday or Wednesday)

**Week 3: Dec. 14** – We are called to be courageous: Fear of being embarrassed – Donations of personal hygiene items to Cats Claws-et Connection (Middle School) Specific items needed will be shared in a Google doc.

**Week 4: Dec. 21** – We can look to other people when we are scared: Fear of being hungry –Physical items rather than monetary donations will be collected for the Food Pantry and snacks items for Cats Claws-et

**Week 5: Dec. 28** – We are called to help those who live in fear: Fear of lack of clothing – Clothing:–donations to Cats Claws-et. Specific items needed will be shared in a Google doc.

# This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025



We still have the following roles open in the next 2 weeks!  
Please consider signing up:

**December 21st Needs:**

Ushers

**December 24th Needs (Xmas Eve 4pm):**

Acolyte

Communion Assistants (2-3 needed)

Readers (2 needed)

Flowers\* (all willing to donate poinsettias are welcome!)

**December 28th Needs:**

Communion Assistant

Flowers

Coffee Fellowship (will be part of service)

**IF YOU CAN SERVE PLEASE [SIGN UP HERE!](#)**

Want to help but not sure what the job entails?

Learn more in our [Worship Volunteer Guide](#)

## This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025



Please consider hosting a meal for our Wednesday evening faith formation ministry, "Wednesdays of HOPE"

WOH Resumes January 7!

Winter Session runs through Feb. 11th (BINGO Night)

Simple, kid-friendly meals are needed to feed 15-20 people

Reimbursement is available, just save receipts!

This is a great way to get to know our youth and a chance to partner with other HOPE members to co-host! Fun for everyone!

[\*\*SIGN UP HERE TO HOST\*\*](#)

# This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025



## **NO WOH DURING ADVENT**

During the Advent season we encourage our youth & families to simply participate in the meal fellowship, learning, and worship of our wider HOPE family!

Join us Wednesdays, Dec. 3rd and 10th at HOPE  
5:45 Meal

6:30 Worship or Learning

December 17th 6:30PM Songs and Suds Christmas

## **2 More Sessions Remain This Year:**

**Winter Session 2:**

January 7-Feb. 11

**Spring Session 3:**

April 8-May 13

**[LEARN MORE & REGISTER HERE](#)**

This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025

# *Longest Night*

*A quiet, welcoming space for anyone needing calm in a chaotic season. This service is especially for those experiencing grief, loneliness, or sadness—and for all who simply need a moment to breathe and be held in God's peace.*

*DECEMBER 21 | AT 6:00 PM*

*Ezekiel Lutheran Church*

*202 S 2<sup>nd</sup> Street*

*Sponsored by churches in the  
River Falls area.*





## **2025 LSM Musical Advent Calendar**

**Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.  
Nov. 30 – Dec. 24**

**Experience the fifth annual Musical Advent Calendar from Lutheran Summer Music, with daily musical meditations to inspire reflection throughout the season. Follow along on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube.**

**All videos are archived at [LSMacademy.org/acal](https://LSMacademy.org/acal).**

**P.S. It's also time to nominate students for LSM 2026! Help a young musician experience a transformative summer of music, community, and faith at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn. Nominate them today at [LSMacademy.org/nominate](https://LSMacademy.org/nominate).**

# JUST A LITTLE *Reminder*



An official check request form must be filled out (either in the office or [printed from home](#) and brought it) in order for Olive (Office Admin) or Jason (Church Council Treasurer) to write a check for:

- Personal reimbursements
- To pay bills associated with Ministry Team expenses
- To complete donations to any and all mission projects/expenses

**Any check request should also include all necessary receipts or invoices**, in hard copy whenever possible. Thank you!



I truly want to be as present as possible with the congregation on Sunday mornings and I want to be able to give all church business my full attention. My priority on Sundays is worship and fellowship with God and God's people (that's you)!

To honor that, please refrain from asking church business questions, attempting to schedule meetings, etc. with me on Sundays, especially from 9:15-11AM. I can respond better to an email or text once I'm less distracted, and the paper record helps me greatly! Thank you for your understanding!

**DON'T MISS THIS!**  
**How Has God Shaped You?**  
**[CLICK HERE TO FILL OUT THE SURVEY](#)**

Pastor Annie is collecting responses to this spiritual autobiography questionnaire. You are invited (and encouraged) to spend a few holy moments in reflection as you prayerfully consider how God has shaped you and your life. All responses are confidential and will be used to guide future adult education offerings, fellowship opportunities, and more.



**HOPE ANNUAL MEETING**  
**SUNDAY JANUARY 25, 2026**  
More details to come!

## This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025



### **DON'T FORGET! MISSION TEAM HAS YOUR KWIK TRIP GIFT CARDS & CAR WASH CARDS FOR ALL YOUR HOLIDAY NEEDS!**

HOPE's Mission Ministry reminds you that Kwik Trip Gas cards and Car Wash cards are available to you as part of our fundraising for Our Neighbor's Place!

**Gas Cards: \$25/\$50 amounts**

**Car Wash Cards: \$36 for 5 Ultimate Washes**

\*Portion goes directly to ONP!

Cards available every Sunday and Mon-Wed, 8:30-3:00 in the church office.

*Checks payable to "Our Neighbor's Place," cash also accepted.*

Office Admin, Olive Olson, Pastor Annie, or any member of our Mission Team can assist you in getting a card.

**Thank you for your continued support of Our Neighbors' Place!**

# Luther Point BIBLE CAMP

## Winter Camp

February 6 – 8, 2026  
6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade  
\$95/camper

### Theme

Building Community  
How very good and pleasant  
it is when kindred live  
together in unity!  
–Psalm 133:1



**You are invited to**

**5:00-7:30**

**Sun Jan 11**

**All Ages Activity**

**Bishop Q&A**

**Good Food**

**Fellowship**



**Who:** Members of the body of Christ in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

**Where:** First Lutheran Church  
218 County Rd K, New Richmond

**When:** Sunday, January 11, 2026  
5:00-7:30pm

**Schedule:**  
500 Dinner  
545 All Ages Activity  
645 Bishop Q&A,  
730 Presentation  
Depart



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Everyone is invited to attend this Synod-wide event!!  
Join together with lay members of other local ELCA congregations to share a meal, do a service project together, and hear from the NWSWI Bishop Martin Halom!**

**THIS IS A FREE EVENT!**

Please [REGISTER HERE](#) by January 5th, 2026

**We will make arrangements for carpooling!**

# This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025



## Please lift up the following people in prayer

Charlie Sowa and Family

Jean Lemire Anderson (Sister-in-law of Karen Brohaugh)

David Anderson (Brother of Karen Brohaugh)

LaVonne Getschel and the family of Darel Getschel

Kirsten Reile (Nancy Sailer's cousin)

Chantel Ashton (Friend of Olive Olson)

Lois Rosenthal (Mother of Jeff Rosenthal)

Kateri Carver (Friend of Linda Jacobson)

Leslie Randall (Sister of Vicki Siebold)

The Family of Jill Siebold (Daughter of Gary Siebold)

Ed Paulson and family

The Family of Mindy Rudiger Ramberg (Friends of Faye Perkins)

Gwen Paulson and her son Chad Sequin (Friend of Bill & Kay Montgomery)

Amanda Olson (Olive Olson's daughter)

Jim Deming (friend of Marc & Martie Guthrie)

Mary Alice Jones (Mother of Martie Guthrie)

Cathy Hjersjo (Friend of Darcy Boock)

Sylvia Secrist (Friend of Paula & Phil Klacan)

Carol Prince (Friend of Betty Lou Oppegard)

Brent Larson (Friend of Bill & Kay Montgomery)

Darel and LaVonne Getschel (Keith Getchel's parents)

Bob Schuder (Father of Sarah Bondhus)

Mavis Wegleitner (Family of Dale *Wegleitner*)

Family of Rosina Hendrikson (Family of Mary Thompson)

Marcus Stack (Friend of Steve & Karen Kaste)

Jacob Dan and family (Friends of Jeff Rodewald)

Patricia Miller (Sister of Carl Warren)

Rhiannon Bondhus (Niece of Bondhus family)

Eden Annoye (Relative of Debra James)

Fatma Aljarrah (Friend of Faye Perkins)

Michael Jacobson (Brother of Linda Jacobson)

Barb Carmichael (Friend of Nancy Sailer)

Dennis & Sandy Schultz (Friends of Bill & Kay Montgomery)

Hannah Forward

Daryl Kleeman (Brother of Darcy Boock)

David Boock (Relative of the Boocks)

Lee Hill (friend of Naomi)

Gary Siebold

David Hendrickson

**December Baptisms**

Phillip Klacan  
Sawyer Filarsky  
Pastor Annie Ladnier  
Eden Ladnier  
Heathley Neuhaus  
Piper Rodewald  
Linda Simpson



**December Birthdays**

Alexis Rehbein	3-Dec
Dale Bohnert	5-Dec
Mark Bondhus	5-Dec
Tatum Glaubitz	9-Dec
James James	11-Dec
Susan Schuettpelz	11-Dec
Luke Filarsky	15-Dec
Sara Filarsky	15-Dec
Karen Hamilton	17-Dec
Grete Rehbein	17-Dec
Jason Neuhaus	20-Dec
Bruce Schuettpelz	22-Dec
Gary Siebold	26-Dec
Alyssa Boock	27-Dec
Noelle James	27-Dec
Cameron Leitch	27-Dec
Ella Wolfe	29-Dec
Hazel Ladnier	30-Dec
Richard Range	31-Dec

**This Week at HOPE December 17, 2025**



All are invited & needed  
to participate in the leading of worship!  
Please prayerfully consider sharing y  
our time and talents!

**[SIGN UP HERE](#)**

Want to help but not sure what the job entails?  
Learn more in our [Worship Volunteer Guide](#)



**Did you know HOPE is on Facebook in TWO places??**

**[Public HOPE Facebook Page](#)**

For public information, events, and Gospel sharing

**[Private HOPE Facebook Group](#)**

For private events, picture sharing, sharing joys & prayer concerns,  
and living out our faith together

**Make sure to like, follow, and join both to stay up to date!**