



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



Christmas Eve | What do you fear?
GOOD NEWS IS LOUDER THAN FEAR

Honeysuckle

There is an abandoned house on my block.

Maybe someone owns it and is just waiting to fix it up,
or maybe it belongs to a family that simply cannot let it go.

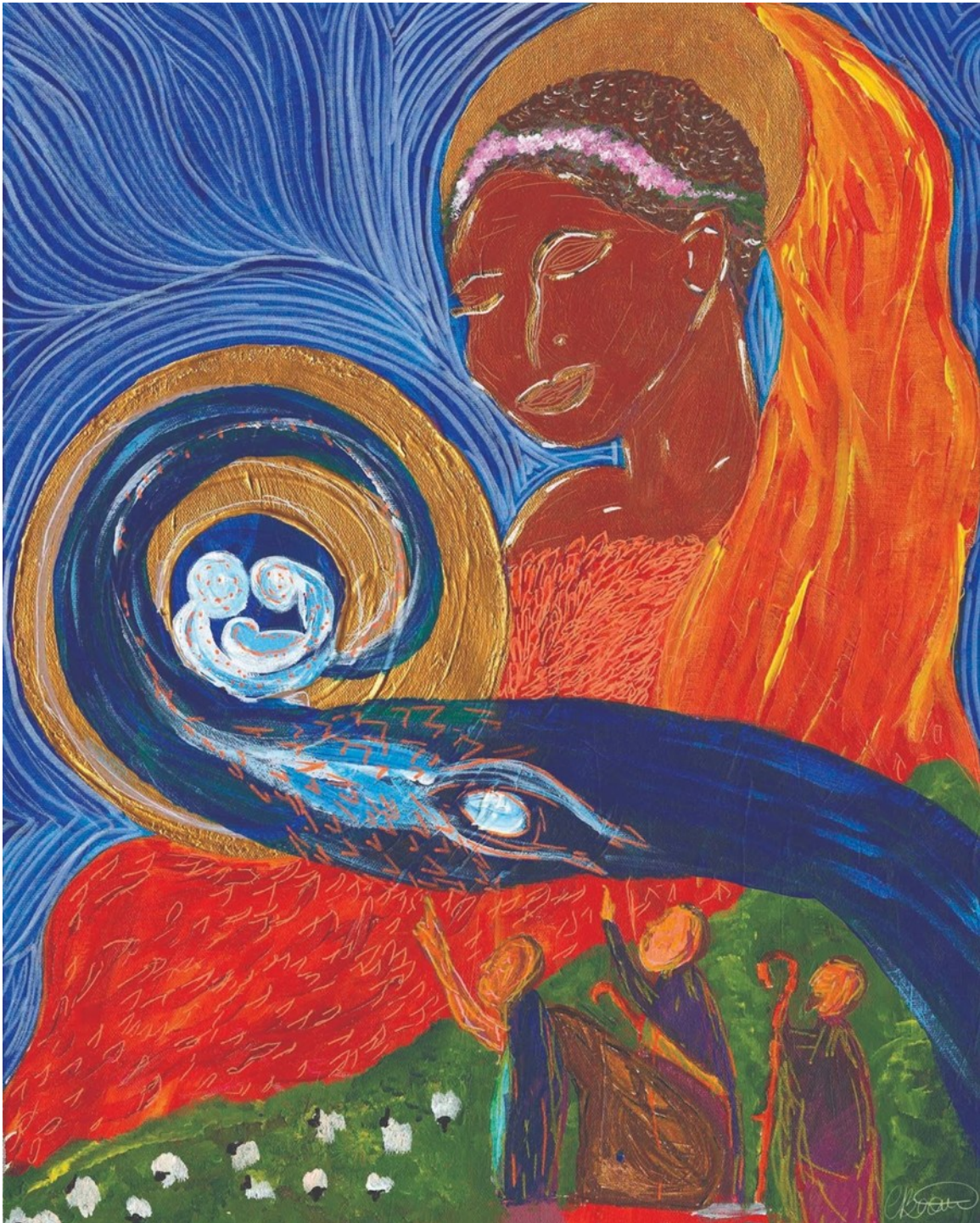
Either way, the yard is an overgrown tangle of weeds—
crabgrass and yellow nutsedge, horsetail and clover—
unforgiving and entrenched.

Over the summer, a honeysuckle bush crept
from that forgotten house over the fence and through the yard.

It spilled out in broad patches on the sidewalk. As a result,
you could not pass that mess of a house without the taste of honey in your mouth.

You could not pass that mess of a house without being engulfed in the sweet scent
of something good. It was almost as if the earth was saying, sure, things are chaotic here,
but pause for a moment. Pull a flower bud off in your fingers. Break the stem.

Slurp the tiny bead of honey at the base. Remember that even when bad news is unforgiving
and entrenched, good news grows out of its cage, across the sidewalk, just to get to you.



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

This Week at HOPE December 23, 2025

BISHOP HALOM'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE: WHEN GOD SHOWS UP



As we approach the season of Christmas that so many of us adore, I'd like to address a few churchy words that theologians like to use and sound impressive when using them. The first word is *incarnation* and the second is *Emmanuel*.

If your church uses the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), you will again hear the passage from the first chapter of John on Christmas Day. The passage famously concludes in verse 14 with the words, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us..." This verse speaks directly to the concept of incarnation. In other words, it speaks to a God who literally takes on human flesh and enters this world in the form of baby Jesus. It's in stark contrast to what some believe and experience - a God who exists far away, only to look down on us from God's heavenly throne. Instead, the incarnate God speaks to a God who is willing to take on the human experience with all the joys and sorrows that come with it. One can readily see that Jesus did indeed make his way through the human experience. He felt joy. He felt pain. His eyes teared up. And even if I can't recall a story when he laughed, I gotta believe that he really did!

Another passage found in the Christmas season comes from the gospel of Matthew, which references Isaiah 7:14: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us.'" One of the most important lessons I ever learned in seminary was in a pastoral care class. I had hoped to learn what to say, especially to someone hurting or grieving. What I learned was much more important. Instead of learning what to say, I was taught to show up - to be present. As time passes, few will remember what I say, but will remember that I was there. That's precisely why the name *Emmanuel* means so much to me. It's a constant reminder that God is always with us. Consider the final words in the gospel of Matthew: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20b) Presence matters because God embodies it and teaches it.

Christmas is known for its gift giving nature. We share gifts with one another to reveal our love for them. This year, I hope that regardless of the quantity or quality of the wrapped presents that lay under the tree, you will recognize the gift of presence. Not only the presence of your loved ones, but particularly the presence of God. So many of you will grieve as you experience the lack of presence from a loved one due to death or distance. My heart grieves with you. My hope lies in a God who provides and will gift you all with someone who will be present with you in some way at some time. If nothing else, remember God's presence as you receive the body and blood of Christ in the worship services that you attend, for that's yet another way in which God shows up.

Fellow disciples, Merry Christmas to you all and may the presence of God incarnate, Emmanuel, embrace you in such a way that brings warmth to your heart!

Bishop Martin

This Week at HOPE December 23, 2025

A poster for a Christmas Eve worship service. The background is a warm, orange-toned image of a snowy landscape with evergreen trees. In the top left corner is the HOPE LUTHERAN logo, which includes a small illustration of a church steeple. The text is in a clean, sans-serif font. A central graphic of a lit lantern with radiating lines is positioned on the left side.

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

SPECIAL MUSIC BEGINS AT 3:45PM!

A poster for a Christmas PJ & Breakfast Church service. The background is a light blue color with various white line-art icons: a sun, a star, a coffee cup with steam, a Christmas stocking, and a bell. The text is in a simple, sans-serif font.

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 cele-
brate the first Sunday of Christmas!**

This Week at HOPE December 23, 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/

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 23, 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 Lidix 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.

Week 6: Epiphany Sunday Jan. 5 – Fear doesn't stop us from doing what's right – Collecting monetary donations for Robin's Nest Children's Home and Melody House in Jamaica that suffered significant damage from Hurricane Melissa, and/or TravelingWithAPurpose.org (founded by former HOPE member Tonya Lesmeister now living in Kentucky, an organization which provides short term volunteer service to those in need, especially in Jamaica; check their FaceBook page).

This Week at HOPE December 23, 2025



December 24th Needs (Xmas Eve 4pm):
Flowers* (all willing to donate poinsettias are welcome!)

December 28th Needs:
2 additional readers
Flowers

January 4th Needs:
Reader/Prayer Leader
Acolyte
Communion Assistant
Flowers
Coffee Fellowship Host

This Week at HOPE December 23, 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**](#)



WINTER SESSION BEGINS JANUARY 7, 2026!

Winter Session January 7-February 11, 2026

All K-5th grade children are invited for “Faith Adventures!”

This winter we dig into some of our favorite Old Testament stories like: “The Battle of Jericho,” “David & Goliath,” and “Jonah & the Big Fish”!

All 6th- 10th+ youth are invited for our Confirmation Ministry!

Join us this winter for a deep dive into Lutheran History & Theology, The Creed, and The Lord’s Prayer

THE WHOLE CONGREGATION IS INVITED FOR OUR ANNUAL BINGO NIGHT ON WEDNESDAY, FEB. 11, 2026

5:45: Meal & Fellowship

6:15-7:15: Games & Learning

WE WELCOME NEW TEACHERS AND MEAL HOSTS!!!!

Spring Session 3:

April 8-May 13

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER HERE](#)

This Week at HOPE December 23, 2025

LAST CALL!!!

How Has God Shaped You?

[CLICK HERE TO FILL OUT THE SURVEY](#)

Pastor Annie is FINISHING 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.

ANNUAL MEETING & MEAL



DATE
JANUARY 25, 2026



TIME
10:45 AM

Come celebrate another year of God's amazing ministry and lift up our dreams for 2026!

**Enter to Win:
Best Soup
or
Best Bar**

This Week at HOPE December 23, 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
6th – 12th 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

All Ages Activity

Good Food

Fellowship

Sun Jan 11

Bishop Q&A



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 23, 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!