

Hope Lutheran Church

Marked By

Grace

March 2026
Newsletter

From Our Pastor

A Magnificat for Lent

Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said,

*“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.*

*For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.*

*And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.*

*He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;*

*he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.*

*He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”*

The heart of Mary's praise of God comes from the stark reversal of fortune she experiences in becoming the mother of Jesus. As a young, relatively ordinary Israelite descended from the tribe of Judah, she could never have anticipated God's choosing for her to become the bearer of the God-man himself. Yet God does choose her, and it elicits one of the most well-known and profound declarations of praise ever recorded.

Mary's praise reveals something quite close to the heart of God and describes his consistent operation in the world. God “opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (Prov. 3:34). The lofty, self-satisfied, and mighty in this world will find themselves time and again cast down and humbled. The humble, the hungry, and the lowly will instead find themselves lifted up by the merciful favor and grace of our God. This pattern will happen again and again and it is for the benefit of all that God keep doing it.



Lent is a moment where we have the opportunity to look first at ourselves and ask whether we are among the humble or the proud in this world. Are we confidently living in our sins? Are we looking for sinners out there somewhere (when the call is coming from inside the house)? God will, out of love for us, oppose us lest we be destroyed by our own hands. Do we see the need for repentance, change, forgiveness in our hearts and lives? Then we can expect, though it is painful to be so self-reflective, God will nevertheless lift us up.

I would like to leave you with a thought to carry with you through Lent: what is one sin you have long since ignored or excused in your life? Where would humility, lowliness, the willingness to accept rebuke and correction change your relationships, your commitments, your love and actions in this world? Before you give up sweets or some other thing for Lent, try to live away from an old, tired sin that has long impeded your life. See how the Lord, through his mercy, might in that moment of repentance meet you and lift you up.

Leaning on the Lord with you always,
Pastor Devin Murphy

Music Ministry Updates

Instrumental Ensemble

Make a joyful noise to the Lord! Hope's Music Ministry is excited to expand by forming a new Instrumental Ensemble. This group is open to proficient musicians in 9th grade through adults who have a fully functional instrument and a desire to serve in worship. Rehearsals will take place throughout the church year as this ensemble shares their musical gifts during services. Whether you play brass, woodwinds, strings, percussion, guitar, piano, or organ, if you have an instrument tucked away, now is a great time to dust it off and consider joining.

Music Ministries-Tech Team

Hope's Music Ministry is launching a Sound Tech Team and inviting individuals ages 17 and up to consider serving. If you have an interest in electronics, audio, streaming, or simply wish you had joined the tech team years ago, this may be a meaningful way to serve. Volunteers will assist with running the soundboard and streaming program during Saturday evening and Sunday morning worship services. Training sessions will be provided and are required for all team members. This ministry plays an important role in sharing the Word of Christ both in person and online with those who cannot attend worship.

Questions? rvarner@hopelutheranwf.org

Lenten & Easter at Hope

Marked By Grace

Midweek Wednesday Services

Join us each Wednesday evening through 3/25 at 6:30 PM for our Lenten Midweek Services as we continue the sermon series Marked By Grace. This season offers a meaningful time for reflection, repentance, and spiritual growth as we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Easter.

Soup and Sandwiches

Join us for Lenten Soup and Sandwiches each Wednesday during Lent from 5:30–6:15 PM. This simple meal is offered as a time of fellowship and hospitality before our midweek Lenten worship services. A free-will offering will be collected. Each week features a rotating menu prepared by Hope families, with grilled cheese and an additional soup available most weeks. We invite you to come early, share a meal, and spend time together as we prepare our hearts during the Lenten Season.

Menu

March 4: The Agner Family- Turkey & bacon sandwich, Italian wedding soup

March 11: The Spottiswood Family- Ham & Swiss sandwich, Vegetable soup

March 18: The Varner Family- Egg salad & pimento cheese sandwiches, Ham & bean soup

March 25: The Nicotera Family- Bacon, lettuce & tomato sandwich, Chicken noodle soup

Grilled cheese & additional soup available each week

Egg Donations

Help us make Eggstravaganza extra special by donating filled Easter eggs. We are collecting pre-filled plastic eggs to use for our upcoming celebration. Donations can be placed in the designated bins located in the Gallery. Thank you for helping create a fun and welcoming experience for our kids and families as we celebrate together. Questions? mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org.

Easter Lilies

Celebrate Easter by purchasing a lily in honor or memory of a loved one or special moment. These beautiful lilies will decorate our worship spaces and help create a welcoming and joy-filled environment as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord.

Cost: \$13.75 per lily. Payment must be completed through registration to secure your purchase. Please keep your receipt for your records. Questions? bevans@hopelutheranwf.org



Eggsiravaganza

Join us for Eggstravaganza on 4/4 from 10:00–11:00 AM for a fun and festive celebration for Kids' Ministry. Families will gather in the Sanctuary before heading outside to the Back Lawn and Preschool Playground for egg hunts and activities. In case of inclement weather, the entire church has been reserved so the fun can continue indoors. This is a joyful way to celebrate the season together. Questions? mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org

Holy Week at Hope

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on 3/29 during our regular weekend worship services. As we move through the week, we gather again on 4/2 at 6:30 PM for Maundy Thursday and on 4/3 at 7:30 PM for Good Friday. These services invite us to slow down, reflect, and prepare our hearts for Easter. Come walk through the final days of Jesus' earthly ministry and experience the depth of His love and sacrifice together as a church family.

Easter Sunday Services

Join us as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and the joy of new life together.

We offer multiple worship opportunities throughout Easter morning:

- **Sunrise Service – 6:45 AM**
- **Traditional Communion Services – 8:00 AM & 11:00 AM**
- **Baptism Service – 9:30 AM**
- **Children's Service with Communion – 9:30 AM**
- **Children's Service – 11:00 AM**

Whether you prefer a peaceful sunrise gathering, a traditional liturgical service, or a family-focused children's service, there is a place for you at Hope this Easter.

We look forward to celebrating together — Christ is risen!

Holy Week Office Closure & Campus Update

The church office will be closed March 30–April 3 as our staff focuses on preparing for Holy Week and Easter. While the office will be closed to regular traffic, staff will still be on campus, checking email, responding to questions as we are able, and handling urgent situations.

Parking lot sealant work will begin Sunday afternoon and continue through Wednesday, with line painting taking place Thursday morning. It is critical that no vehicles drive on newly sealed areas. We kindly ask that you limit non-essential visits to campus during this time.

Thank you for your understanding and flexibility as we prepare to celebrate Easter together. Questions? office@hopelutheranwf.org

Upcoming Events

Trivia Night Showdown

The Hope family is invited to a night of dinner, laughter, and friendly competition at Trivia Night Showdown on 3/6 from 6–8 PM. Enjoy dinner, drinks, and dessert while putting your trivia skills to the test with questions for all ages. For one night only, our middle school students will serve as hosts and servers as this event supports their upcoming summer trip. Bring family, friends, or neighbors, come up with a creative team name, and get ready for a fun evening of fellowship. Sign up early to save your spot. Questions?

mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org



Mother Son Event 2026

Moms and sons are invited to a special Mother Son Event on 3/21 from 6:00–8:00 PM at Hope. This fun-filled evening will include games, a great dinner, and meaningful time to connect and create memories together. Whether your son is young or growing fast, this event is designed to celebrate relationships and enjoy a night of laughter and togetherness.

Sign up early to save your spot.

Questions?

mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org



High School @ Trivia Night

High School students are invited to join us for Hope's Trivia Night on 3/6 from 6:00–8:00 PM. Come ready for friendly competition, great questions, and lots of fun. Cost: \$10 per student with a \$25 family maximum. When registering, be sure to enter the code HOPEHS. Students signing up individually will register at \$10, while families registering multiple high school students can use the family maximum. Sign up early and come ready to play. Questions?

wspottiswood@hopelutheranwf.org

VBS 2026 Road Trip USA

Vacation Bible School is coming back to Hope, this year's theme is Road Trip USA — a Hope original theme. VBS will take place 6/22–6/26, and registration for both kids and volunteers opens 4/1 at 9 AM. VBS is open to children ages 4 (and potty trained) through rising 5th graders. Volunteers must be rising 6th grade and older. Mark your calendar for both the event dates and registration opening. We can't wait to take this journey together as we grow in faith, build friendships, and share the love of Jesus. Questions?

vbs@hopelutheranwf.org

Squishmallow Party

K-1st graders are invited to a fun-filled Squishmallow Party on Sunday, 3/1 from 12:30–2 PM in the Children's Center. Kids will enjoy a pizza lunch, games with Squishmallows, squishy crafts, and a Squishmallow Talent Show where they can bring and show off their favorite Squishmallow. This playful afternoon is designed just for K1 Crew to connect, create, and have fun together.

Questions? mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org



Mini Masters: Youth Tournament

Middle school students are invited to Mini Masters: Youth Tournament on 3/27 at 6 PM for a mini golf experience at Hope. For this event, the church will be transformed into a full mini golf course featuring creative holes like elevator golf, and bounce house golf. This high-energy night is designed for fun, laughter, and friendly competition as students connect with friends in a unique way. Questions? mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org



Middle School Summer Trip

Middle School students (rising 6th through rising 8th graders) are invited to join us for an unforgettable Summer Trip to Kentucky from 7/12–7/16. Students will visit the Ark Encounter, Creation Museum, and Kentucky Kingdom while growing in faith and strengthening friendships. This trip offers a meaningful mix of learning, adventure, and fellowship. Cost: \$550. Sign up early to reserve your spot and begin preparing for this incredible experience. Questions? mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org



Mulch Day at Hope

Help us get Hope's campus ready for Easter by joining us for Mulch Day on 3/21 from 8:00 AM–12:00 PM. This is a great hands-on opportunity for individuals and families to serve together as we refresh planting beds and outdoor spaces around campus.

Please bring shovels, pitchforks, wheelbarrows, gloves, and wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty. All ages are welcome. Questions? pphillips@hopelutheranwf.org

Calling All Trucks & Trailers

We are calling all trucks and trailers to help our kids deliver pine straw on 3/7 beginning at 8:00 AM. Meet in the back back parking lot and help transport orders while our students handle the unloading. Even if you are not able to stay the entire time, having additional trucks and trailers available makes a huge difference. Help support our youth and help make the fundraiser a success. Questions? wspottiswood@hopelutheranwf.org

Retreats

Men's Retreat

Men are invited to spend a weekend away at Camp Cheerio in the mountains of North Carolina for the 2026 Men's Retreat, March 13–15. This retreat offers time to step away from everyday distractions and focus on faith, fellowship, and renewal.

Participants will enjoy meaningful Bible study, worship, and connection with other men from Hope, along with outdoor activities such as archery, basketball, fishing, golf, and more. The weekend also includes incredible meals and shared time together.

Questions?

wspottiswood@hopelutheranwf.org



Spring Women's Retreat @ Hope

Join us for the Women's Spring Retreat at Hope on March 13–14, a meaningful time set aside for rest, renewal, and connection with God and one another. This retreat offers space to step away from the busyness of everyday life, grow in faith, and build relationships with other women from Hope. Whether you are looking for spiritual encouragement, deeper connection, or simply a pause to refocus, this retreat is designed to bless and refresh you. Sign up early to

save your spot. Questions?

mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org



Support The Mission

Help Us Share Life at Hope

We are gathering photos to help share the life of Hope across many platforms, including social media, digital signage, print materials, and more. If you have photos from Hope events, worship, volunteering, or special moments like baptisms, we would love for you to share them. Please email digital copies to photos@hopelutheranwf.org. If you have printed photos, you may bring them to the church office and we can scan them for you. When submitting photos, please include what the photo is from, when it was taken, and whether it was taken on Hope's campus, at the Stone Chapel, or off property. Your photos help us tell the story of what God is doing in and through our church family.

Ways to Give at Hope

Thank you for supporting the ministry of Hope Lutheran Church. Every gift—big or small—makes a real difference and helps us care for people at every stage of life. Your generosity supports Kids and Youth ministries, meaningful music and worship, Care Ministries that walk alongside our Hope family in times of need, and outreach efforts that serve our neighbors and community. Because of you, Hope continues to be a place where faith is nurtured, relationships are built, and the love of Jesus is shared every day.

Questions?

kfaris@hopelutheranwf.org



Altar Flowers

There are still Altar Flower sponsorship spots available. Each adult may reserve one weekend per year to give more people the opportunity to participate.

Sponsoring altar flowers is a meaningful way to recognize loved ones or special moments while helping create a beautiful and welcoming worship space. If you would like to recognize additional loved ones or moments beyond your altar flower weekend, consider a Coffee & Fellowship Sponsorship as another wonderful way to honor special occasions and bless the congregation.



Other Updates

New Website Coming Soon

Hope's new website is coming soon, with a planned launch in mid-March.

We're excited to share a refreshed look, updated colors, expanded information, and a cleaner layout designed to make it easier to find what you're looking for. Our goal is to reflect who we are as a church — friendly, welcoming, and relatable — while clearly sharing God's love and the many ways to connect at Hope. Be sure to check it out when it goes live.

Lost and Found Clean Out

It's that time again — our Lost and Found is overflowing. Tables will be set out through March 4 in the narthex so you can check for any missing items. We have everything from jackets and toys to glasses and more. Any items not claimed by March 4 will be donated on March 5. Please take a few moments to look through the items before they are gone for good.

Questions?

office@hopelutheranwf.org

Volunteer & Support

Mobile Food Ministry



Join the Mobile Food Ministry on 3/4 from 1:00–7:00 PM as we serve dinner at the Durham Boys & Girls Club. This is a meaningful opportunity to share Christ's love through food, fellowship, and presence in our community. Volunteers are needed to help prepare, serve, and connect with those we are supporting. Sign up early to reserve your spot.

March Brown Bag

Brown Bag continues to serve our community through fellowship and outreach. Join us on 3/21 from 11:00 AM–1:00 PM in the Children's Church Foyer as we gather to prepare sandwiches and chips for distribution in local neighborhoods. This ongoing ministry is a simple and meaningful way to serve together and share Christ's love in our community. Sign up early to help us plan accordingly. Questions? kapernan@gmail.com



Wake Forest Preservation Project

Hope Lutheran Church is partnering with Habitat for Humanity of Wake County for an upcoming Wake Forest Preservation Project. Volunteers will help replace an existing back deck that is in very poor condition, serving a local family and sharing Christ's love through hands-on service. Hope has committed to provide three volunteers each day to work alongside Habitat FOH team members. If additional volunteers are interested, we may be able to open more spots. No construction experience is required—just a willing heart and helping hands. Questions? rogermadariaga@aol.com



Helping Hands

Helping Hands is a part of our care ministry that supports families during times of loss by providing food and serving for funeral receptions at Hope. This ministry allows grieving families to focus on what matters most while knowing their church family is walking alongside them. Volunteers help prepare, serve, and clean up meals as needs arise. If you feel called to serve in this quiet but meaningful way, we invite you to join the Helping Hands Realm group or reach out to learn more. Questions? pjay0826@gmail.com

Thanks from Claudia

Angel Tree – Thank You

Every year that I have been heading Angel Tree, you all have gone above and beyond for hundreds of children and their parent(s). It warms my heart to see the families at our Distribution Christmas Party as they witness the generosity Hope Lutheran Church has lavished upon them. My heartfelt thanks go out to all of you who gave with your whole hearts and helped me and my team, Dottie Reading and Linda Hutson, provide a fun and welcoming morning for our Angel Tree recipients. Thank you for following Jesus' words in Acts 20:35 (NIV): "...remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" – Claudia

Night to Shine – Thank You

Dear Members of Hope,

I would like to thank you all for your prayers and support for one of my favorite events we put on at Hope, Night to Shine. To be able to get such a fantastic team of Hope helpers to support the work to bring it together was amazing. But what is truly a blessing is to see the teenagers of Hope step up to help make a whole lot of young adults, who are different from them in so many ways, feel exceedingly happy and special. That speaks volumes of the parents who are raising them. Keep teaching and showing them how to be the hands and feet of Christ and they will go on to make a difference in this world.

Thanks to Briana and Emily for their patience, to Makayla and her constant encouragement, to Wesley and his desire to always help the guests sing their hearts out. To my team leaders—Tonya Watt, Amy Crenshaw, Bridgette Wood, Sylvia & Mike Denning, Miki Wolff, Kati Zick, and Ann Thompson—thank you for teaching me how to be a successful delegator.

Here's to a successful 2026 Night to Shine... because shine it did! – Claudia

Faith Formation

Kid's Lessons

March Sunday School lessons in Kids' Ministry will focus on age-appropriate learning and faith growth across all groups. Preschool JAM and K1 Crew will explore Ruth: Caring for Others as they learn about faithfulness and kindness. Level 23 will continue studying the Books of the Bible, helping students grow in their understanding of Scripture. Club 45 will learn about Famous Kids of the Bible and how God worked through young people to accomplish His purposes.

Youth Lessons

Youth Sunday School continues the year-long study, People of the Bible. Throughout this series, students are exploring the lives of key figures in Scripture and discovering how God worked through ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary purposes. Each month builds on the last as students grow in biblical understanding, faith conversations, and practical application for their own lives.

Adult Lessons

Join us in March for a congregational study working through nearly the entire book of Romans. This Adult Sunday School class will coordinate with our Lenten sermon series, "Marked By Grace," as we move verse by verse through this powerful letter from the Apostle Paul. Together, we will explore the depth and breadth of God's grace and reflect on the many ways we have been marked by Him and transformed by His Word. Whether you've studied Romans before or are opening it for the first time, this is a meaningful opportunity to grow in faith alongside your church family.

Spring New Member Class

If you are interested in learning more about Hope Lutheran Church, our Spring New Member Class is a great place to start. This class offers time to explore what we believe, who we are as a church, and how you and your family might connect with life at Hope. Attending the class does not require you to join, and it does not mean your entire family must join. This is simply a space to learn, ask questions, and discern next steps at your own pace. Members are encouraged to share this opportunity with friends, neighbors, or family members who may be interested in learning more about Hope. Questions?

office@hopelutheranwf.org

