

# HOPE HERALD



December 2019 – February 2020

## HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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## PASTOR'S CORNER

Christmas season has not lost its wonder for me. Each year I eagerly await and enjoy it, shining through despite the commercialization. It can immediately trigger a montage of memories of all kinds. There are Christmas villains like Scrooge, the Abominable Snowman, and the Grinch. There are those whose Christmas wonder is duly rewarded in the end like Charlie Brown or Ralphie. There are those who almost lost faith like George Bailey and those who clung to it when it seemed impossible like Fred Gailey (Kris Kringle's lawyer). There are those who emerged from ridicule to stardom like Rudolph and Buddy the Elf; those who found love like the Velveteen Rabbit, and those whose loving sacrifices shone brightly like O. Henry's Jim

and Della. And of course, there are the sad elements too of loss and sorrow like the Little Match Girl, Tiny Tim, and the boy buying Christmas Shoes.

Good stories enrich our lives. They open vistas of emotion and vicarious experience. They broaden our noblest qualities and pattern our capacity to interpret life itself. There is one Christmas story which performs these things supremely. It has villains (like Herod and Rome); those who clung to faith (like Simeon); those who emerge from ridicule to stardom (like Mary); love and commitment (Joseph); wonder (the shepherds); glory (angels); the great quest (wise men). Throw in some animals and stars with travelogue from Persia to Egypt and it's no wonder I look forward to hearing the Christmas story every year.



Yet this story has one other thing going for it – it's true! Of course, many stories convey truth, but when I say that this one is true, what I mean is that the events and details of the story took place objectively in history. Walter Kaiser made an essential observation once in question form, “what is the significance of a story that didn't really happen?” The answer of course is that it may tell us a lot about what someone else (or even we ourselves) may think about the world. They cannot tell us something that is objectively true about the world. That the Christmas story is factual and reliably accurate means that we not only have a great story, but that the message of the story – that God has sent His Son into the world in the flesh to deliver His people from their sins – that message is for real!

So this year, hear the story again. Listen with fresh ears. Resist the sedimentation of passively letting the words float by for the 1000<sup>th</sup> time. Actively lean forward into the story to hear it anew, to listen for emergent elements or emphases that had been missed in the past. Excitement is often volitional at first (“I do want to hear this story!”) but that is often what it takes to prime the pump and get the flow of freshness started again.

On the calendar, Wednesdays in Advent will begin with shared meals at 6pm in the fellowship hall followed by Advent Services at 7pm in the sanctuary. Christmas Eve service is at 7pm and Christmas Day will offer a traditional service at 10am with Christmas music by George starting 15 minutes prior. Enjoy them with me!

**Pastor Tim Oswald**

## **HOPE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH** **ENDOWMENT FUND**

Our congregation has an Endowment Fund approved by the Church Council and voting members of the congregation in 2017. The Fund is under the direction of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod and managed by the Church Council. Since the Fund was initiated, members of Hope have already contributed to this account.

The long-term goal of The Fund is to provide our congregation with resources well into the future. At this time of year, we hope that our members will have a family discussion, if not already done so, to include our church in your Christian estate and gift planning. The Lord instructs everyone to be good stewards of the resources He has entrusted to us.

If you have any questions about The Fund, please see me.

**George Kelm**  
**President of the Congregation**

## **BANNERS AND PARAMENTS**

We are entering the New Year of 2020. You may notice some of the banners and paraments have been updated as we enter this New Year. Thanks to the Women of Hope for financially supporting the purchase of the updated banners and paraments. Watch for the new banners and paraments!



## **GOD OF THE LITTLE THINGS**

**Psalm 103, Psalm 103:13, Exodus 3:7, Matthew 6:9-13, Romans 8:8-15**



Is God concerned about the details of your life? Does He care about the “little things”? Piles of dishes need to be done. The washer leaks a big soapy puddle on the floor—you’ve got people coming in an hour. Little things. Nobody else seems to notice or pay that much mind...so why should God? After all, isn’t He the God of the BIG things? Isn’t He the one who spoke swirling galaxies into

the vast frontiers of space, who measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and calculated the dust of the earth (Isaiah 40:12)?

Why should this great, awesome God notice the tears that came to my eyes this morning at breakfast---when no one else noticed? Why should the creator of the universe care about the worries that kept me awake until two in the morning? Why should the mighty Sovereign of Eternity be concerned about the fact I'm late for an appointment and can't find a parking place?

Sure, the Bible says He has compassion for His people. But isn't that sort of a "general" compassion for humankind? Isn't that an arms-length kind of compassion? Just how intimately is God involved in our small petty problems? David says He has the compassion of a father.

I remember my father having a kind of intimate, heartfelt compassion with me. Often when my dad would be busy at his easel, I'd sit on the floor at his side with my crayons and coloring book. Sometimes he'd set his brushes aside, reach down and lift me onto his lap. Then he'd fix my hand on one of his brushes and enfold his larger stronger hand around mine. Ever so gently, he would he would guide my hand and the brush, and I would watch in amazement as, together, we made something beautiful.

This is the kind of love our God has for us. FATHERLOVE. The kind gentle compassion of a dad who cares deeply for his sons and daughters. Maybe you never had a dad like that...but you do have such a Father.

Let God's big hand close gently over yours. With His help, even the discouraging scribbles of your life can become a masterpiece. Nothing would delight a father's heart more.

*Written by Joni Eareckson Tada*

The women that were at our Bible Study on November 21<sup>st</sup> found so much meaning as we shared stories of the little things in our life that we sometimes forget to turn to God for help with. We talked about the women in our Bible verses – how their life was so different than ours today. They walked for miles, often barefoot, in hot weather, with many children. They had no medical help during childbirth, or if a family member became ill. Our generation complains about our health system and the lack of immediate help and the cost of Medicare and insurance for children and those under 65. But the women of 2000 years ago leaned on their faith as we should too.

We had a very interesting Bible study that brought smiles and shared memories to all of us. I wish you all could have been there. Our next meeting is **Wednesday December 11<sup>th</sup> at 9am**, at my house. For address and additional info, please email me at [kay.cooke052446@gmail.com](mailto:kay.cooke052446@gmail.com). Come and enjoy the fellowship of Christian women, Gods word, fresh fruit and muffin and beverages. Refresh yourself from the busy preparations for Christmas!

**Kay Cooke**

## **WOMEN OF HOPE**

The Fall brought another wonderful and busy time for Women of Hope!

Thanks to everyone who helped serve at our worship service on October 6 for LWML Sunday. If you missed getting a mite box, more are available. Funds from the mite boxes are used for projects in our District, as well as for funding grants at the national/global level – all for the purpose of reaching out to others and spreading the Word of God.

In September we were able to purchase a large flip chart map that will help Pastor show everyone various locations mentioned in the Bible as part of his weekly Bible studies. In October, we were able to purchase some much needed banners and paraments to help beautify our church.

**Operation Christmas Child** was a success again this year! Over **40** boxes were collected to share with children in various parts of the world, including the US, to help them know the true meaning of Christmas and let them know Jesus loves them. Thanks to **Nadine** for coordinating everything for us.

We used our November meeting time to put together **Blessings Bags** for the homeless/needy, as well as Christmas gift bags for our shut-in's and the residents at Burr Oak Manor in Genoa City. Thanks to all of your donations, we were able to make up over **50** Blessings Bags with water, snack items, daily grooming and personal care items, pads of paper, pens and more! Anyone in the congregation may take one or more bags to give out. We will be giving bags to the Twin Lakes Police Department as well for them to distribute on their rounds. Christmas bags will be delivered to Burr Oaks on December 8 during our monthly trip there, and everyone is welcome to join us for our little service and singing Christmas songs. Donations for future Blessings Bags are appreciated at any time.



We are once again sponsoring the annual **Countdown to Christmas/Reverse Advent Calendar**, and encourage our congregation members to help with this. This is a special project that

you and your family can participate in that will greatly help people in our community. Here's how it works – each day in Advent, instead of opening a window on the Advent calendar and **GETTING a gift, you will GIVE a gift!** Simply put a food item, toiletry item, school supply, mittens, scarf, etc. in a box or basket until Christmas (or the end of December). Everything will be delivered to the Twin Lakes Food Pantry in January, as the need is greatest after the holidays are over. More information can be found in the bulletins. Questions? Please see **Gail**.

And last but not least - Women of Hope have a booth reserved at the **2019 Trees on Parade** event at **St. John the Evangelist Parish Hall** (across from Richter's). We have become quite well-known in the community for our delicious cookies in the beautiful tins and they welcome our participation! Dog treats and small craft items will also be available at our booth.



**Times to remember:**

**Packing the goodies – Thursday, 12/5 6:00pm**

**Set Up and Selling - Friday, 12/6 (set up at 2:00pm, sell from 4:00pm – 8:00pm)**

**Selling and Clean Up - Saturday, 12/7 (sell from 10:00am – 5:00pm, and then clean up).**

Please be sure to have everything in the downstairs fellowship area at the church no later than **Thursday, December 5**, unless you plan to

package and price your items yourself and bring them directly to St. John's at set up time. Signup sheets are in the Narthex with the information and times for packing, transport, set up, selling, and clean up. Please reserve the dates and join in the fun – this event is a great chance to showcase your creative talents and for Christmas shopping as well! Please see **Gail** with questions.

There will be no “official” meetings in December, January, and February. We are always looking for ways to serve our community, and help our church so please share your ideas.

Thank you to everyone in the congregation for participating and helping with what we do to serve the Lord, our church and our community. We feel very blessed to be part of a congregation that truly wants to spread the Word of God and help others. If you have questions or suggestions, please see Gail, Tami, Dawn, or Doris.

Have a very blessed Christmas and may the love of the Christ Child remain in your hearts all year long!

**Gail Feick**  
**President, Women of Hope**

## **CHOIR NOTES**



Our Fall choral season will draw to a close at Thanksgiving. Hopefully, you have enjoyed what we have done so far! We feel blessed to have so many of our members from last year back with us, and more young children too!

As we look toward Advent and Christmas, we will be working on some new selections that we have not done in the past. There is still time to join us to sing during Advent and the Christmas services, so if you are interested, please let me know. Frequent visitors to Hope are also very welcome to join us. During Advent, we will move our normal 7:30pm rehearsal time to immediately follow the mid-week Advent services. We will still sing every other Sunday, as well as Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, so we have a lot of work to do before we take a break!

A huge thank you to the members of the Hope choir – **Doris, Kay, Dawn, Jim, Marie, Amanda, Joules (our newest smiling face!), Lori, Cheryl, Peter, Ron, Dave and Pastor Lind – and Pastor Tim** who joins us on occasion! A big thank you, also, to **George** for accompanying us so beautifully, and to **Nadine** for keeping track of our sheet music and schedules for the bulletin.

If you enjoy music and singing, please consider spending some time with us for fellowship, fun and making a joyful noise to praise the Lord! If you have a special song or hymn you would like us to consider singing, please let us know! Blessings for a joyous Christmas!

**Gail Feick, Director**



Thank you so much to everyone who has signed up recently to serve during our Coffee Fellowship hour! Thank you ALSO to those who have sent in baked items for our freezer; we use them if we ever run

short and for an occasional “freezer day” when there is no one available to sign up to serve. All of your work is greatly appreciated. Some of the fruit and nut breads are brought to guests who visit our church and express an interest in meeting with Pastor. It’s a great opportunity to bless someone who has come through our door! I am so grateful to all of you who participate.

If you have not yet signed up, and might be interested in doing so, please see or call me. Our Coffee Fellowship (now nicknamed “Tasty Fellowship”) simply needs a person (or two; feel free to work as a team) to provide the equivalent of 3-4 pans of snacks. You may certainly use store bought items as well! Suggestions of what to bring include slices of cake, donut holes, fruit, trail mix, mini bagels with cream cheese, cracker and cheese squares, salami bites, vegetables with dip, gelatin squares, etc. Everyone really enjoys these little snacks before heading down to Sunday School. The sign-up sheet is on the table in our fellowship area. Thank you so much!

**Blessings, Dawn Oswald**  
**Oswald8079@gmail.com or (757) 450-0889**