

HOPE HERALD



December 2025-February 2026

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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PASTOR'S CORNER:

Ok, a little quiz of things related to the season from Dr. Martin Luther, who loved Christmas-

Can you think of Christmas traditions that are tied to Martin Luther (even though we are not sure about some of them)?

Gift-giving on Christmas Eve – Luther wanted to get away from the idea that “saints” brought our gifts (which happened on St. Nicholas’ Day, Dec 6th) so he instituted giving gifts in his family on Christmas Eve and told the children they were from the “Christkind,” the holy Christ-child. The timing caught on but although they still honor visits from the Christkind in Germany, the popular view of gifts reverted back to St. Nick.

Lighted Christmas trees – Luther walked home one night and saw the stars shining through the fir trees. It inspired the idea to put lights on the Christmas trees.

Luther composed hymns in the language of the people and encouraged congregational singing. Christmas favorites from him include “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come,” (yes, with all of its 15 wonderful verses), “To Shepherds as They Watched by Night,” “Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice,” and “We Praise You Jesus at Your Birth.”



Luther’s Christmas Sermons are among his most compelling. Here is a segment from one...

I wouldn’t have believed. If I’d been God and wanted to save the world, I wouldn’t have done it that way. I would have just called in the devil and twisted his nose and said, “Let my people go!”

But God is amazing. He sends a little baby, as weak as an earthworm, lying in the feedbox of a donkey, and that little baby crunches the devil’s back and overcomes all the power of Hell, and sin, and death.

Make this season all about Christ! Join in worship **Christmas Eve at 6:00pm and Christmas Morning at 10:00am.**

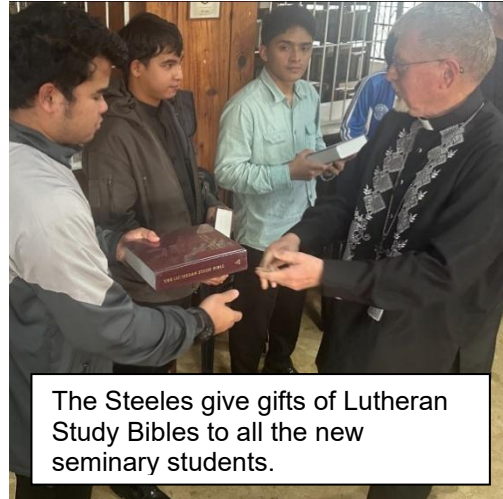
Hope is a sending church!

In the early church at Jerusalem, the Christians heard that there were new followers of Jesus among the Hellenists in Antioch, so they sent Barnabas there to minister to them. Christian congregations with a heart for Christ’s great commission have always sought to “send” representatives into fertile fields of mission for the sake of the Gospel. One of the things for which I am filled with rejoicing is that Hope is a sending church. Over 10% of our budget goes outside of

the church for the work of the Gospel – and that amount is supplemented enormously by Brat sales, the Car Show, and special offerings which all go to the efforts of our fellow Christians somewhere around the world. Sola Deo Gloria!

Hope is a sending church!

In 2025, we supported Rev. Dr. Walt Steele and his wife Robyn as they transitioned from working with the Lutheran Seminary in Kenya, to the **Philippines**, where they will support the Lutheran Church there along with the Lutheran Seminary where Dr. Steele has been installed as a faculty member. He is teaching five classes and coordinating with church leaders on how they can strengthen Lutheran churches across the region and plant new congregations. Robyn, whom Hope Lutheran Church also supported this year in her Deaconess studies at Concordia Ft Wayne, has been supporting the women's groups of the local churches. Less than a year after their arrival, they have already had an earthquake and several typhoons. Hope's proposed budget for 2026 would double our gift to them.



The Steeles give gifts of Lutheran Study Bibles to all the new seminary students.

Hope is a sending church!

Hope received a thank you from "A Place of Refuge" in Milwaukee for our gift of \$500. They share Jesus and provide a loving and caring environment for women in crisis pregnancies or dangerous situations.



Hope is a sending church!

Mountainside Lutheran Church in North Carolina returned a heartfelt thanks with their deepest gratitude for \$1808 from



Hope's Car Show. They are rebuilding after devastating destruction from hurricane Helene. Earlier in the year, the Women of Hope also sent them a large gift. They are the only Lutheran presence in the tri-county area where they are located.

Hope is a sending church!

Hope has been blessed to have Pastor Hesham Shehab from Salam Christian Fellowship serve as our guest preacher from time to time. He always engages us with fascinating insights to God's love and the message of salvation through Jesus to Islamic adherents who did not know Him. Besides a special offering of over \$800, proceeds from one of the Brat Sales this year of \$700 also went to support his work during a time of financial challenges. We pray for this beloved servant of Christ in his difficult but critical work.



A few others...

Twin Lakes Food Pantry sent a thank you for 100X \$10 gift cards to Berkots that they will distribute to needy families for the Holidays.

In addition to Robyn Steele at Concordia, Ft Wayne, Hope contributed to 2025/26 tuition for Indelethio Nebeker who is with his wife and three of their five children while studying at Concordia St. Louis.

The Good News about Jesus reaches many people around the globe through **The Lutheran Hour** ministries which recently thanked us for our support again this year.

Hope gave an offering to **Lutherans for Life** to partner in their varied ministries of educating, advocating, and defending the value of every person made in God's image.

Half of the Car Show proceeds this year went to **Lutheran Church Charities** specifically for their efforts to provide K-9 comfort dogs as a bridge to proclaim Christ among those suffering or in need.

The Lutheran Witness

Hope is paying for Lutheran Witness for congregation. It is a understanding our faith



subscriptions to The each household of our wonderful resource for and its impact upon our lives in this world. If you are not receiving it, please let Pastor know.

LUTHERAN MUSIC, TALK, AND PERSPECTIVES

Do you enjoy talk radio? Or do you listen to music during the day? Why not take those interests captive to Christ? Look up *ISSUES ETC.* and listen to music that will edify your souls instead of the world's music; and catch some of the marvelous interviews by host, Will Weedon, to sharpen your knowledge of the things that are most important in life.

<https://issuesetc.org/>

Pastor Tim

TIJUANA MISSION PROJECT **JULY 26-AUG 2, 2025**

This past summer, I had the privilege to serve our LORD and witness to families in Tijuana, Mexico by building three homes along with my brothers and sister in the faith from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Crystal Lake.

Under the guidance and watchful eyes of Karl Storz who organizes and coordinates every last detail with our local contact, Daniel Martinez. Karl arranges flights, reservations, meals, van rentals, and assigns all the volunteers to the various construction teams. This year we had three teams led by men with construction experience.

I was privileged to lead seven enthusiastic men, women, and teens in the construction of a home for our family, which consisted of husband, wife, three children, and grandmother. Every year the houses are built to a specific blueprint on a 12'x12' concrete slab prepared by Daniel before we arrive.

Each house has four walls of 2"x4" framing and ½"OSB painted and trimmed. The shed style roof is covered with waterproof material. By being higher at one end, the homes have a 4'x12' loft which typically serves as the sleeping area for the children. There are two windows and a door with a dead bolt lock. The interior is unfinished and there is no electricity or running water – but it safely protects the family from the elements.

The team flies to San Diego on Saturday, picks up groceries, and drives into Tijuana. Sunday, we attend church, visit the town, and prep materials for the week. On Monday, all team members get familiarization with tools and techniques and then visit the building sites. They complete the homes over Tue, Wed, and Thur. Friday morning, the homes are joyously dedicated and the keys are turned over to the families. That afternoon, they drive back to San Diego, have dinner together, and enjoyed a free day at La Jolla Shores on Saturday.

This was my third trip with Immanuel and every year, the enthusiasm and dedication of the people amazes and humbles me. Their witness to our LORD and Savior, and expressions of faith are constant reminders, both for the families who receive homes and for us, of the

strength in the Holy Spirit. The trip reminds me of our many blessings at home as well as an encouragement in faith for the families in Mexico.

**Through Christ,
Dave Peschke**



CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

We thank you, parents, for the honor and blessing of teaching your children the Word of God, both in lesson and song. We are using new curriculum this year, and it has all of our classes on the same lesson each week (which is great for siblings in different level classes) with many lessons from the Old Testament. This year's Christmas program will take place during our worship service on **Sunday, December 21**. The children are working very hard and are really excited about it! Thank you for sharing your precious children with us.

Hope's Teachers and Assistants

WOMEN OF HOPE

Saturday September 20 Women of Hope held our annual luncheon at Hope. It was wonderful, we had 18 ladies attend and we are so blessed and grateful they could join us. Dawn and Tabra lead our event with games, activities and fellowship. Thank you to all who attended.

Lutheran Women Mission League (LWML) weekend was October 18/19 at Hope. Several ladies participated in the service and we recited our pledge together as Sisters in Christ. Saturday we had cupcakes to go for those present and on Sunday LWML cake was served.

Monthly Mites has been a wonderful program we started in August. Your loose change can go towards different mission groups that our LWML ladies collect and send to district. Some funds are for our district to use for those in our area, the rest goes to our national group that decides worldwide or nationally where the funds go. Our last mites collection for 2025 will be December 6/7. We have small mite boxes for you to take and return your loose change monthly. You are welcome to help yourself to whatever we have on our LWML table in the narthex.

Currently we are working on Trees on Parade. This is the 3rd year for Women of Hope (WOH) to decorate our Christmas tree at St. John's Church in Twin Lakes. Our Sunday school children will be making ornaments for our tree. We will have a bake/craft sale. All proceeds will go to Safe Families in Racine/Kenosha area. Their office is in Elkhorn. A movement fueled by radical hospitality and intentional compassion to support families facing social isolation. Faith motivated and family-focused. www.safefamilieswi.org Please come out and support us on **December 6, 4:00-8:00 pm and December 7, 10:00 am-4:00pm.**

We will also host an event Advent by Candlelight for our ladies, their friends or family members. It will be held at our lower level on **December 12, 5:30-7:00pm.** We will have a host for each table and ladies will be contacted by the host asking what finger food they would like to bring. A time of reflection, mediation, songs, as we come together awaiting our Savior's birth. Please contact Cathy Viau 847-917-3692 or Tabra Gonski 847-481-9379.

Our next Ladies Luncheon open to all ladies, their friends or family will be **January 6, 2026**, Tuesday at Local Folks in Slades Corners at 11:30 am. Come for fellowship with our Sisters in Christ, as we enjoy our delicious meals and have fun.

Women of Hope meet quarterly, our next meeting will be **March 3, 2026**, 4:30 pm church lower level. We welcome all Ladies at Hope to join us. Questions please contact **Beth Schneider 262 351-6578**.

OUTREACH

Making Christ Known to Others

Spiritual conversations. For part of my career I worked in an office with about 600 employees, probably half engineers. There was a full time Doctor on site, Dr. Potts. She was a great Doctor and always had an engineer joke. One I remember is: How do you tell an extroverted engineer from an introverted engineer? The extroverted engineer looks at your shoes when they are talking to you. I think when it comes to spiritual conversations suddenly all of us become introverted engineers. How to start a conversation about Christ? How to continue the conversation? Just having a spiritual conversation with a stranger is uncomfortable. Talk about the Packers with friends or strangers— no problem. Share your faith and making Christ known to others? For many not so easy.

If you wear a Packers jersey, strangers you meet start talking about how great the Packers are. Conversations are easy. A few years back we had “How Can I Pray For You” T shirts for people working the Outreach table at the brat fry mission fundraiser. One of our members recently wore one of the T shirts to Menards. Checking out the clerk asked our member to pray for them. The member’s T shirt both showed his faith in Christ and acted as a conversation starter for a spiritual conversation. The conversation became easy. There are many ways to start a spiritual conversation. This one was excellent. An engineer is about identifying a problem and providing solutions. Do you have a problem starting a spiritual conversation? Problem solved! Pastor will be holding a Bible study in March on Beginning a Spiritual Conversation. Good stuff. When the dates come out block your calendar in ink. We will also be having special events/training about the same time.

Outreach will be joining Women of Hope at the Trees on Parade cookie sale. Tabra suggested purchasing cookie boxes with Bible verses on them. Great idea, great spiritual conversation starter, and great way to reinforce what the Christmas season is all about. We will also have ornament crafts for the children and Bible tracts for adults. Let me know if you are interested in helping with outreach at Trees on Parade. You don't have to do it alone. Mike would be happy to partner with you.

Outreach decided to have a Community Easter Egg hunt at Hope March 28 in place of Egg Your Neighbor. It is still in the early planning stages but as of right now we will have an outdoor (weather permitting, indoor if not) Easter egg hunt, indoor stations of the cross walk, and snacks. This will take a lot of help. More to come as plans are firmed up. Let me know if you would like to join the Outreach Committee planning this community event.

This year Pastor asked the Outreach Committee to help define which missions and missionaries Hope financially supports. The guidelines were: tithing and beyond, giving weighted towards Word and Sacrament over acts of mercy, doctrinal commitments (synod, district, RSO's, Lutheran, others), relationships (a history with Hope, Hope members involved, and some tie in such as missionaries we know). Based on feedback 2026 mission and missionary giving was tweaked from less international to more local. Several missions and ministries were added.

EVANGELISM



In October Paul Schneider and Peter Voigt were blessed to join a team from Brookfield Lutheran Church on a mission trip to Thailand. While there they worked closely with fellow Christians to paint, lay a concrete patio, and build walls for a new church building. They also led a breakout session for middle school children during the Ban Hmong Hope youth conference. The themes for the sessions were "God's love for us" and "sharing God's love with others". Ban Hmong Hope hostile is located in Chiang Mai. Children who live in the mountain villages and want to continue their education past the 5th grade public schooling can stay at the hostel. Children are transported to and from school each day. At the hostel children learn about Christianity, as well as many important life skills.

Please feel free to ask Paul and Peter questions about their trip. Let them know if you have interest in foreign missions.

CHOIR NOTES



The beautiful Advent and Christmas time of year is here and time for us to raise our voices in praise of the Lord and rejoice!

Recently, we welcomed **Alana Fragassi** as a new choir member. So grateful for having Alana join us. You may recognize her, as she helps with many projects at church, including singing with the ladies ensemble, assisting with Sunday school and will soon be participating in confirmation class.

We will enhance our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services with some new music as well as our traditional hymns. We also look forward to our part in the 12/21 service, which will include new music for the congregation and choir, and the Sunday school program.

Thanks to all who made suggestions for the choir to consider in the coming months. I look forward to using these selections. Hope you will enjoy hearing them, along with some additional harmony.

If you enjoy music and singing, please consider spending some time with us for fellowship, fun and making a joyful noise to the Lord! If you play an instrument and would like to play for a service, please let George or me know.

May the Lord grant all a blessed Christmas and a safe and joy-filled 2026!

Gail Feick
Director

STEWARDSHIP NEWS



Our congregation has seen many changes both interior and exterior throughout this year. Some of these are small projects by individuals and some have been accomplished by a group working together. It is amazing to see our members love for the Lord by their tireless efforts to edify our church.

I do not attempt to mention individuals by name, as I know I would leave off some members. Large projects include the recently completed lower storage area, continuing the cabinet doors that are identical to the coffee area. Another project was the new installation of additional landscaping on the east side of church. Thank you to the individuals that kept this area watered each week.

Thank you to our live stream team, choir, Elders, Council and committees that contribute to our congregation.

I wish you and your families a most Blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas in Christ.

George Kelm
Stewardship Chairman